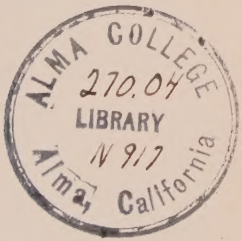
Catholic Biographies.

Vol. III.



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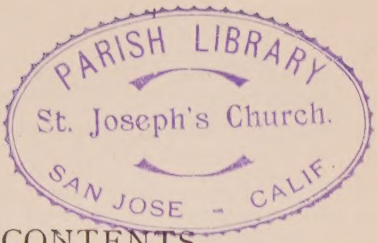

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Our Holy Father, Leo XIII.

BY

THE REV. JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

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"I ANNOUNCE to you tidings of great joy. We have for Pope His Eminence the Most Reverend Lord Joachim Pecci, who has taken to himself the name of Leo XIII."

In these words the choice of the Cardinals in Conclave assembled was promulgated by the senior Cardinal Deacon from the balcony of St. Peter's at two o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th of February, 1878.

We have for Pope the two-hundred-and-sixty-third of his line; the Great High Priest, the First of Bishops, the Heir of the Apostles, the Universal Pastor, the Form of Justice, the Mirror of Holiness, the Pattern of Piety, the Defender of the Faith, the Guide of Christians, the Advocate of the Poor, the Terror of Evildoers, the Glory of the Good, the Father of Kings, the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World, the Priest of the Most High, the Vicar of Christ. These are titles of his office. He who then took them up had all the wisdom and dignity with but little of the feebleness of age. He had almost

completed his sixty-eighth year. He had been Cardinal twenty-four years, Bishop for thirty-five; and it was full forty years since his hands were first anointed with the sacred unction of the priesthood. Time flew by. Leo XIII. surpassed all the high expectations that were entertained of him. On the first day of the year 1888 he solemnized, and the whole Catholic world with him, the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood, an account of which is appended to this short biography.

Vincent Joachim Pecci was born on the 2nd of March, 1810, at Carpineto in the diocese of Anagni in the Papal States. At eight years of age he was sent to the College of the Jesuits at Viterbo. There he made his first communion on the feast of St. Aloysius, June 21, 1821. In 1824 at the age of fourteen he went to Rome. He followed the course of rhetoric in the Roman College, which Leo XII. had just restored to the Jesuits. In the same College he studied philosophy and mathematics for three years, and theology for four years more. Half a century later, when seated on the Chair of St. Peter, he reverted to his career at the Roman College in the following terms, replying to Father Cardella, Provincial of the Roman Province, S.J.: "With joy do we remember the happy tranquillity of those days, the throngs of students, their disputations on philosophical and theological theses, and the profound scholars who presided at them; and we now gladly and publicly declare that our heart has ever since been so closely bound to those great men, and to your Institute, that it has never been, nor ever shall be, estranged." Thus far he had gone with the education of a private ecclesiastic, or even of a layman in a Catholic country, where the Church opens her theological schools to all her children. He was now to commence his training as a spiritual ruler of men. He was to qualify himself to enter what we may call the diplomatic service of Holy Church. Few people have any idea of the extent of this

service, or of the wisdom and experience of the officials engaged in it, Cardinals, Monsignori, and young Abbates serving their apprenticeship in the school out of which Popes are taken. Business from all quarters of the world, complex law affairs, delicate questions involving personal susceptiblities, all flow in to the Sovereign Pontiff, and pass to and fro between him and his advisers, even the youngest heads being called upon to contribute their share of wisdom to assist in the settlement. Years of this work are necessary to make one conversant with the system of government of the Universal Church. That is one reason why in our time a Pope is never chosen except from the ranks of this official body.

For this service Joachim Pecci, now a young man of some twenty-three summers, went about to qualify himself by entering the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, there to study law and diplomacy. He received the sacred orders of subdeacon and deacon in the beginning of the year 1837. On March 14th of that year Gregory XVI. made him a Domestic Prelate, his first promotion, with the title of Monsignore. On the 23rd of December of that same year 1837 he was ordained priest by Cardinal Odeschalchi. He said his first mass in the chapel of St. Stanislaus at the Jesuit noviceship of St. Andrea, Rome. There St. Stanislaus died at the age of seventeen, and there his body rests. The saintly Cardinal Odeschalchi was himself soon to follow in the footsteps of St. Stanislaus.

Early in 1838 Mgr. Pecci was named Governor of the Papal Province of Benevento. Like Sixtus V., he busied himself with the suppression of brigandage. There is quite a Sixtine humour about the following story. A certain marquis called one day on the Governor in high dudgeon, saying he was just starting for Rome, where he would take care to procure his recall. "Have you considered the step well, marquis?" "Yes, Monsignor, and I'm going at once." "Things like that should be thought out at leisure, you will do me

the honour of staying here for the present," handing him over to a company of carabineers who stood ready. That night the marquis' castle was surrounded, and twenty-eight brigands, of whom he was patron and chief, were arrested or shot.

Mgr. Pecci was three years at Benevento. He was thence transferred to the governorship of Perugia. After a year and a half he was appointed to the higher post of Nuncio at Brussels. Previously to setting out it was considered fit that he should be raised to the episcopal dignity. Besides the bishops who actually govern the sees from which they take their title, there are a nnmber of others, now called *titular* bishops, and formerly bishops *in partibus infidelium*, taking their titles from places in the Turkish Empire, which of course they never visit. These titular bishops are real bishops, as much as any others in the Church. They are employed, some in offices about the Papal Court, others as Apostolic Nuncios or Delegates abroad, others as Auxiliaries to bishops who require help, while others, called Vicars Apostolic, rule the Church in missionary countries. Mgr. Pecci was named to the titular archiepiscopal See of Damietta in Egypt. From Damietta he was to be translated to Perugia, and from Perugia the choice of the Conclave was to carry him to Rome. He was consecrated bishop at Rome in the Church of St. Lawrence by Cardinal Lambruschini, February 19th, 1843. Archbishop Pecci was three years Nuncio at the court of Leopold I., King of the Belgians. In January, 1846, he was named to Perugia. The whole of February that year he spent on a visit to London. When he got back to Rome, Gregory XVI. was dying. On the 1st of June the Papal Chair was vacant. But the hour of Leo XIII. was not yet come.

During the two-and-thirty years that Pius IX. governed the Universal Church, Joachim Pecci sat in the See of Perugia, doing the "good work" of a bishop according to the mind of St. Paul. On December 19, 1853, Pius

IX. created him Cardinal Priest by the title of St. Chrysogonus. In September, 1877, he summoned him to reside in Rome, and with the office of Camerlengo gave him the chief charge of the temporalities—such as still remain—of the Holy See.

Before leaving Perugia, Cardinal Pecci addressed a last pastoral to his flock, on the question, "Is the Catholic Church hostile to the progress of industry, art, and science?" His answer is a strong and earnest No. Indeed he writes of modern discoveries with an enthusiasm that recalls Lord Macaulay's Essay on Bacon:

"One century inherits the inventions, discoveries, and improvements of those preceding it, and thus the sum of physical, moral, and political benefits, grows marvellously. Who would compare the miserable huts of primitive peoples, their rude utensils, their imperfect tools, with all that we of the nineteenth century possess? Nor is there any more comparison between the articles produced by our ingeniously constructed machinery and those toilsomely wrought by the hands of man. There can be no doubt the old highways, unsafe bridges, and long and disagreeable journeys of old times make a poor figure by the side of our railroads, which, as it were, fasten wings to our shoulders, and have made our globe smaller, so near have they brought nations to each other. Is not our era by the gentleness of its manners superior to the rude and brutal days of barbarism? Are not the mutual relations of man with man more friendly? Has not the political system from certain points of view, improved under the influence of time and experience? No longer is private vengeance permitted, nor torture; and the petty feudal tyrants, the wrangling communes, the wandering bands of Free Companies—have they not all disappeared?"

The Cardinal at the same time protests against the "modern schools of political economy that regard labour as the supreme end of man, and man himself as a machine, more or less valuable as he is more or less productive." He repels the taunt thrown out against the Church, that "she instils into the heart a mystical contempt of earthly things." He shows that the Syllabus, or authentic list of errors condemned by Pius IX., is "not directed against civilization and science, but against atheism and materialism, and against that civilization which would supplant Christianity, and destroy with it all wherewith Christianity has enriched us."

The writer promised to return to this subject, if life permitted, at a future day. He was to return to it, but not as Bishop of Perugia. On the 20th of February, 1878, Cardinal Pecci was chosen Pope by the votes of forty-four Cardinals out of sixty-two, two-thirds being the requisite majority. That afternoon the new Pope gave his blessing to the people inside St. Peter's, not in the square without. He was crowned on the 3rd of March with the tiara, or triple crown, which he assumed, not in St. Peter's, where all his predecessors but one have been crowned ever since 1555, but in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Leo was about to continue the seclusion which Pius had adopted as a protest against the Italian occupation of his city of Rome.

In this matter of protestation the present Pope has been as emphatic as his predecessor. In his first Encyclical dated Easter Day, 1878, he writes: "We cannot omit, because of Our office whereby We are bound to the defence of the rights of Holy Church, to renew and confirm by these Our letters all the declarations and protests, which Our predecessor of holy memory, Pius IX., published and reiterated against the occupation of his civil principality and the violation of the rights of the Roman Church." In the like sense he spoke with great emphasis to four hundred representatives of Catholic journalism, on February 22, 1879:

"That no occasion of error may remain, it is of the utmost importance, to remind Catholics that the supreme power of the Church, which was divinely conferred upon Peter and his successors to keep the whole family of Christ in the faith, and conduct them to the eternal happiness of the heavenly Kingdom, must according to the appointment of Christ Himself be exercised with the fullest freedom; and to ensure this freedom in every part of the world, an all-wise Providence ordained that, after the dangers and troubles of the early period of the Church, a civil princedom should be attached to the Roman Church, and preserved intact through a long series of ages, amidst the changes of revolution and the wreck of kingdoms. For this weighty reason, and not, as We have often said, impelled by ambition or the lust of power, the Roman Pontiffs have ever felt it their sacred duty to defend this civil sovereignty from violation or disturbance, and to preserve intact the sacred rights of the Roman Church; and We Ourselves following the example of Our predecessors, have not failed, nor will We ever fail, to assert and vindicate those rights."

At his accession, Leo XIII. found in Germany, to use his own words, "dioceses without bishops, parishes without priests, freedom of public worship infringed, seminaries of the clergy prohibited, and the number of the clergy so reduced that many Catholics were out of reach of the offices of the Church and of the Sacraments." That better state of things which it has been the singular glory of his Pontificate to have brought about, he thus describes to the Cardinals in the same Allocution, May 23, 1887:

"The Roman Pontiff's authority in the government of the Catholic Church has ceased to be considered in Prussia as a foreign authority, and provision is made for its free exercise in the future. Liberty is restored to the bishops in governing their dioceses. The seminaries of the clergy are given back. Most of the religious

orders are recalled." He goes on: "For the rest We shall continue Our efforts, and considering the Emperor's will and the intentions of his ministers, We have reason to hope that the Catholics of that nation may take courage, for We do not doubt but that a better time is coming. Nothing do We so much desire of the Divine Goodness as that life long enough and ability be given Us to behold the Catholic religion enjoying a settled and secure state in all Germany." Catholics throughout the world may do well to bear these words in mind when they are praying for the intention of the Holy Father.

Two great world-wide evils have vexed the soul of Pope Leo: the one the separation of civil society from the Church, the other the alienation of human intellect from the obedience of faith. One of the Greek Emperors at Constantinople rejoiced in the appellation of Leo the Philosopher. An Emperor's attainments are hardly questioned, or perhaps a Pope's either: but Joachim Pecci was famous for his philosophic tastes and wide erudition long before he came to be Pius IX.'s successor. His Encyclical *Æterni Patris* of the 4th of August 1879, will for ever be a landmark to ecclesiastical students,—let us hope, to many lay students also. The interest of it lies in this, that whereas many Catholic divines had come to be of opinion that the old ways of thought of the thirteenth century must be abandoned in combating modern errors, the authoritative voice of our Teacher calls us back to those old ways, and to the great leader and guide in them, the Angel of the Schools, the glory of the Order of Friar Preachers, St. Thomas of Aquin.

The Pope writes:—

"Therefore, while proclaiming that every wise saying and every useful invention or contrivance, by whomsoever discovered, is to be gladly and gratefully taken up, We earnestly exhort you all, Venerable Brethren, for the guarding and adorning of the Catholic faith, for the good

of society, for the increment of all sciences, to restore and propagate widely the golden wisdom of St. Thomas. The wisdom of St. Thomas, We say; for if there is anything in the scholastic doctors of over-subtlety in the questions they raise, or want of consideration in the opinions they deliver,—anything irreconcilable with the ascertained conclusions of a later age,—anything in fact in any way improbable, it is not Our intention to have that set up for our age to copy. For the rest, let the masters whom you shall discreetly choose, make it their object to instil the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas into the minds of their scholars, and to set in a clear light his solidity and excellence above other authors. Let the Colleges that you have established, or shall establish, explain and defend this doctrine, and make use of it for the refutation of prevalent errors."

As to how these injunctions are best carried out, there is room for differences of opinion: but no Catholic should scoff at, or deride as useless, studies of philosophy and theology conducted after the fashion of St. Thomas. Nor have these studies alone been countenanced by the Holy Father: he has written likewise on behalf of history (18 August, 1883) and Latin and Greek for Church students (20 May, 1885). He has done more than write: he subscribes every year £4000 to the schools in Rome.

Thus has Leo laboured by word and work to show that the obedience of faith is not adverse to the development of the human intellect. He has laboured no less earnestly to reconcile the Church and civil society. He has pointed out the benefits which society owes to the Church. So many and so great he declares them to be, that more could not have been accomplished by an organization constructed, as the Church is not, for this world only. He has warned kings and peoples of the dangers that threaten society—oppression, anarchy, and strife of classes, growing wherever the Gospel and its

maxims are uprooted and flung aside. He has rebuked kings in the words of the Book of Wisdom: "The Most High will examine your works, and search out your thoughts: because being ministers of His kingdom you have not judged rightly, horribly and speedily will He appear to you; for a most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule: for God will not except any man's person, neither will He stand in awe of any man's greatness, for He made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all: but a greater punishment is ready for the more mighty" (Wisdom, vi. 4–9). To peoples Leo has preached obedience, to be paid to "the powers that be" in the State, as representing God in their lawful commands. He has detected and condemned "the principles and foundations," as he calls them, "of a new law, unknown before, and differing in more than one respect, not only from the Christian, but even from the natural law." All of us have something to learn from the words that follow:—

"Of these principles the main position is this, that all men, being in the abstract alike in kind and nature, are also in the concrete equal one to another in the business of life: that every man is so entirely his own master as to be no way amenable to the authority of another; that he may freely think what he pleases on every question, and do what he likes; that no man has any right of command over others. In a society constituted on this theory, the governing authority is merely the people's will; no one has any power over the people but the people themselves, none but the people commands the people; they choose nevertheless persons to whom they entrust themselves, yet so as to transfer to them not so much the right as the office of commanding, and that office to be exercised in the people's name. The lordship of God is buried in silence, just as if there were either no God at all, or He had no care and superintendence of human society; or as if men whether individu-

ally or socially owed nothing to God; or as if there could be any government, the whole cause and force and authority whereof did not reside in God. In this way, as is manifest, a State is nothing else than a multitude, master and ruler of itself. And whereas the people is said to contain in itself the source of all rights and of all power, the consequence will be that the State considers itself bound by no manner of duty to God; that it makes public profession of no religion; that it is not bound to enquire which of many religions is alone true, nor to place any one before the rest, nor to favour one especially, but it must give to all denominations equal rights for religious purposes, provided the system of government takes no harm from them. It will be in keeping with all this to leave every religious question to the private judgment of individuals; and to hold it lawful for everyone to follow the religion that he prefers, or none at all, if he likes none. Hence are born such notions as that of the judgment of the individual conscience being free from all law; the most entire liberty of opinion about worshipping or not worshipping God; together with unbounded licence of speculation and publication."

These are principles that Leo XIII. would not have us to utter, nor applaud when others utter them, on political platforms. The Pope loves the Christian people, "the holy people of God." But true love hates to flatter, and is forward to warn against danger and delusion. There is a philanthropy which goes about to destroy the higher hopes of humanity, those hopes which are founded on the promises of Christ. Such is the philanthropy of Freemasonry. Freemasonry tries to thrust itself in as a substitute for the Church of God. Other churches live at peace with it. Their clergy do not refuse on occasions to blend their ministrations with masonic rites. The war of Freemasonry is not against them, but only against the one royal Bride of the King of Kings. Between

Catholicism and Freemasonry there is a truceless war. No Mason can be admitted to the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Leo XIII. has written at length against Freemasonry in his Encyclical of April 20, 1884.

Another false philanthropy, another delusion palmed off upon the people, is that of Socialism. If a Christian man will take Leo XIII.'s advice, instead of turning Socialist, he will join the Third Order of St. Francis. For five centuries the Franciscan has been the poor man's friend, helper and companion in his poverty. The spirit of St. Francis, unworldly, Christ-like, strikes home against that reckless greed of gain and love of luxury, which, gratified in the few, means misery for the many. While condemning Freemasonry, as seven of his predecessors have condemned it, Leo XIII. exhorts the Bishops to promote gilds and societies of Catholic workmen, as being of singular avail for crushing the power of sects of perdition. Workmen, he says, "must be invited into societies that are right and honourable, that they may not be drawn into evil and wrong societies."

Most necessary of all societies for rich and poor alike, the root and spring of all healthy social action, is the Christian family, that society which is formed and multiplied through the sacrament of marriage. On this the Pope has written one of his most important Encyclicals, *Arcanum divinæ sapientiæ*, 10th of February, 1880.

"Let all good men unite in one vast society of action and prayer:" in these words the Pope sums up his practical teaching. And one prayer especially he has commended, as all Catholics know, the Holy Rosary.

Death and Funeral, Character,—these are the last chapters of a biography. But the character of a living Pope it were presumptuous to attempt to draw. We will end, therefore, with two extracts, descrip-

tive of the Pope's daily life and of his personal appearance:

"At six he rises, at seven celebrates Mass, after having spent some time in meditation. After Mass follows a period of prayer and praise. At eight the decisions of his Congregations and other correspondence are attended to, and at eleven the public audiences are held. Then at 12.30 he takes a walk in the gardens of the Vatican, generally accompanied by a prelate and two of the guard. In case of inclement weather or indisposition, Leo XIII. drives through the grounds in a carriage which has been specially built for the purpose. The Pope dines at two o'clock: his mid day meal lasts not longer than half-an hour, and is very frugal, consisting of soup, one kind of meat, two dishes of vegetables, some fruit, and by the doctor's orders a glass of claret. After a short rest, the Pope works in his private study till 4.30, when he receives the Prefects and Secretaries of the different Congregations, with whom he discusses the affairs of the Church. The papers from different countries are brought to him at eight o'clock: the French and Italian papers he reads himself; interesting articles from English and German papers are translated for him. At 9.30 he performs his evening devotions, and at ten partakes of supper, consisting of soup, an egg, and salad. Then he withdraws into his private room.

"Leo XIII. is of medium height. His attenuated figure is bent by study and the weight of years, but in every movement he is astonishingly quick and energetic. His head is a most remarkable one, once seen never to be forgotten, with its every feature out of strict proportion, yet with the harmony of the whole. The small, bright, rapid eyes, set close together denote 'the man who is ever on the search;' the largely developed aquiline nose, a capacity for domination. The mouth, when under a pleasing influence, forms into an exceedingly wide sweet smile, its benevolent expression brightening the whole face, and supplying the benignity which is less observable

in the eyes. The ears, like the hands and feet, are exceptionally large and long. The skin is so thin that a perfect network of blue veins is visible over all the white ascetic face."

Such is our Chief Bishop Leo, whom God preserve.

[The portrait accompanying this memoir is reproduced by the kind permission of Messrs. Sampson Low and Co.]

The Papal Jubilee of 1888.

Pope Leo XIII. was ordained Priest in 1837, and so 1887 saw the celebration of his jubilee of fifty years spent in the Sacred Ministry. All nations hastened to do honour to one to whom honour was due. The Common Father of all the Faithful, the "Bishop of the Catholic Church" drew all hearts to himself, and men flocked from the ends of the earth to do him homage. No wonder then that Rome was filled to overflowing, and that the ceremonies of the Jubilee were witnessed by many thousands.

Many accounts have been written of the glad time; that which follows is taken mainly from one which appeared in one of the Catholic papers at the time.

Shortly after six on the day of Jubilee the streets of Rome began to be crowded, and carriages and foot-passengers were all on their way to the great object of interest, St. Peter's. But it was an orderly crowd, and the young Italian soldiers in the great square of St. Peter's found very little difficulty in maintaining order. The tickets were coloured in various tints for the various

parts of the Basilica, and so there was no great difficulty in their holders finding their places.

The crowd was eager for the approach of His Holiness long before the appointed time; and some slight amusement was caused in one part by a Frenchman falling off a confessional, to the top of which he had climbed to secure a better view. The guard came at last, heralding the approach of His Holiness; and when the Pope came in view there was a burst of enthusiastic cheering. The silver trumpets in the dome and the notes of the great organ were drowned by the voices of the mighty throng. Men forgot the sacredness of the place, carried away by the great joy of their hearts at the sight of the venerable form of the common Father of all the Faithful. Attempts were made by some French priests in one part to bring the people back to a sense of decorum, but in vain. At last the sounds died away, and meantime the Pope had been carried to the foot of the altar. Round the *sedia gestatoria* were the Bishop's assistant at the throne, Mgr. Macchi, the Pope's Major Domo; Mgr. Della Volpe, the Master of the Ceremonies; the Officers of the Noble Guard; and the Princes of the Houses of Colonna and Orsini, two of the oldest families of the Roman nobility.

His Holiness appeared to be singularly well, though very pale and evidently much moved. His voice too, though it seemed to falter a little at the beginning of the Mass, was afterwards clear and strong. The Pope's Mass was a simple Low Mass. There was no music at the *Gloria;* after the Offertory there was Mustafa's Motet, *Oremus pro Pontifice nostro Leone.* At the Elevation the famous silver trumpets played again, but the musical treat of the day was the *Domine salvum fac,* sung by a double choir, of which a portion was in the angle formed by the right transept with the nave, the rest consisting of boys, away up in the dome. At the *Lavabo* the Pope used the splendid gold ewer and basin sent to him by our Queen. The mitre, which the Pope wore as he entered the

church, was the one presented by the Emperor of Germany; while the tiara, which he used in leaving the church, was the gift of the people of Paris. The Pope also wore the chain and cross presented by the President of Columbia; and the magnificent ring given by the Sultan of Turkey. At the end of the Mass a solemn *Te Deum* was sung, of which the congregation chanted the alternate verses. The Pope then again ascended the *sedia gestatoria*, and after a few moments in prayer before the Tomb of the Apostles, pronounced the Papal Benediction. Once more a shout from fifty thousand throats spoke of the loyalty of Catholic hearts, as the Pope passed back to the Vatican.

On Friday, the Feast of the Epiphany, the Vatican Exhibition was opened. The ceremony took place in the halls specially built for the exhibition. Swiss and Palatine guards were on duty at the approaches to the Exhibition. There was a choir of about a hundred and thirty and an orchestra of thirty. The throne of the Holy Father was placed on a dais, under a rich canopy, opposite the orchestra. The ceremony was fixed for noon but before that time the Archbishops and Bishops and others had arrived. The space immediately in front of the throne was unoccupied; but left and right were rows of chairs, the foremost on either side being reserved for the Cardinals and the others for the Bishops. The English Bishops in Rome were all present, and Ireland was represented by the Archbishops of Dublin and Tuam, the Bishops of Cork, Elphin, and Galway, and others.

The Holy Father came in attended by forty Cardinals and the guard and officials of his court. The choir intoned *Tu es Petrus*, while the Pope took his seat, habited in his white cassock. He wore the cross presented to him by the Empress of Austria. When the music had finished, Cardinal Schiaffino stood up and read an address in his capacity of Honorary President of the Roman Exhibition Committee. His Holiness replied, saying that the universality of the offerings was to him

a source of satisfaction and emotion, but what he especially felt was that each of them was a pledge of affection and of prayer. He then declared the Exhibition open. The choir then sang a "Hymn to Leo XIII." Then came the presentation of the Roman Committee, and the Pope walked into the galleries of the Exhibition.

We have not space to recount all the events of the week, though a few lines must be given to a performance that must seem strange to us from its very novelty. On the afternoon of the Epiphany in the Church of the *Ara Cœli*, children might have been heard preaching the little sermons which with much trouble they had been taught. A table covered by a red carpet took the place of a pulpit in the west end of the church, and here some children tried, with varied success, to deliver their few sentences.

Many pilgrims had gone from England to do honour to His Holiness, and on the 10th of January, there were admitted to an audience about five hundred of our countrymen. The audience lasted from nine in the morning till half past twelve, involving no slight labour for a man as old as His Holiness.

His Holiness was accompanied by the English prelate Mgr. Stonor, and by Mgr. Della Volpe. The Pope welcomed the Deputation with warmth, and spoke of England with much affection, and referred to his having met the Queen when he was Nuncio at Brussels. He received the Duke of Norfolk first, and afterwards the Bishops, asking each about his diocese, regarding the number of Catholics in each, and the dispositions of the Protestants towards them. He also inquired about the Religious Orders, and was glad to hear how many Religious of both sexes were devoting their lives to the good of Religion. When he heard that Dr. Lee, the Protestant rector of All Saints', Lambeth, had had a solemn *Te Deum* for His Holiness in his church, he fairly laughed.

The first to be presented after the Bishops and nobility, was the aged authoress, Mrs. Mary Howitt, eighty-nine years of age. The meeting was a very touching one. The Pope said gently to her "We shall meet again soon in Paradise." Lady O'Hagan's youngest boy, a pretty child of five years, was then led forward. The Pope took him on his knees and caressed him repeatedly, and finally asked him whether he would like to stay. The child looked at the Holy Father a moment, and then made what was probably a safe reply: "If mother wants me to." At half-past twelve the Pope rose from his throne and passed into his private apartments.

The Vatican Exhibition was opened to the public on the sixth of January. Here were displayed the gifts of the faithful to the Pope, gifts from all sections of Society, from kings and from poor. Some of these presents come from some Protestant sovereigns, others are the work of poor but loving Catholics, who have spent much time upon this their labour of love.

It would be impossible to give anything like a satisfactory account of the many presents sent to His Holiness. They are displayed in the Vatican Exhibition halls, and form a splendid testimony of the veneration and love of Catholics, and of the high esteem felt for His Holiness even by those not of the Faith.

Our Queen sent by the hands of her Premier Peer, the Duke of Norfolk, a beautiful ewer and basin: they were used by the Pope at his Jubilee Mass. The jug and basin are both made of solid raised gold, and are a reproduction of a pair at Windsor Castle. The ewer bears a seraph in front and has a dolphin on the top of the handle. It is entirely covered by arabesques, having three oval medallions, each with a dolphin in. On the foot are other dolphins sporting in waves of lesser relief—these also again appear on the basin. In the middle of the basin in a circle, which is to receive the foot of the ewer, is the inscription, "To His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. From Victoria R.I. 1888"

The precious mitre is often used in the solemn Pontifical ceremonies; it is the one ornamented with rich embroidery of precious stones. The Roman Pontiffs possess magnificent and very rich ones, but the most precious is that which Mgr. de Schloezer had the honour of presenting to His Holiness in the name of the Emperor of Germany. It is of the pointed shape, closing in a little towards the temples; this is the true Roman shape adopted since 1500. The mitre pendants are of beautiful silver tissue. There are sixty-two precious stones of great value. The Pontifical arms are visible on the pendants on raised gold, surrounded by a thick garland of diamonds, together with rubies, emeralds and sapphires of great purity and brilliance.

The Emperor of Austria has a profound esteem and respect for the Head of the Catholic Church and is especially devoted to our present Holy Father. He sent to the Pope as a mark of his filial affection a crucifix of rare beauty, enriched with precious stones. The figure of the Christ is a masterpiece of workmanship; an aureola of diamonds surrounds the head, while beautiful sapphires and pearls are placed at different intervals. It is intended for the table of His Holiness' study, and will be a fitting reminder of the love of one of his children.

The Sultan of Turkey sent by the hands of Mgr. Azarian, Patriarch of Cilicia, one of those gifts which are offered by sovereign to sovereign. It is a ring of extraordinary beauty and richness. A magnificent diamond of the first water is set in a gold mounting, shaped like a crown. The crown was designed by the Sultan himself. The Sultan has sent it, as he himself says, as a personal mark of his good will and pleasure.

Of quite a different description is the diamond ring sent by the Queen Regent of Spain. Twelve large diamonds set in gold surround the large central stone, a beautiful sapphire. Two more large diamonds are placed at each side, bordered by smaller ones which

gradually converge towards the back of the ring. The gold of the ring itself is beautifully worked.

The Empress of Austria sent a very delicate specimen of Vienna lace worked in roses and lilies, and bearing the keys of St. Peter in the centre.

His Majesty King Albert of Saxony presented to the Pope a copy of the "Biblia Pauperum" or "Bible of the Poor." It is written on parchment by the pen of Lewis Niepver, the director of the Royal Academy of Letters of Leipzig. It is a reproduction of the manuscript "Biblia Pauperum" preserved in the Library of the Lycée at Constance, but of larger proportions than the original.

The Emperor of Brazil offered a pectoral cross in diamond or sapphires. The cross is composed of three rows of diamonds, those in the central row being larger than the surrounding ones: eight still larger diamonds enclose the magnificent central sapphire. Four other sapphires placed at the extremities of the cross are surrounded again by diamonds.

Among the other sovereigns' gifts in the Vatican Exhibition may be seen the Holy Water stoup sent by the Empress of Brazil. It is oval in shape made of precious stones and bears the arms of the Empress. The Princess sent a unique pectoral cross of Latin shape, made up of sixteen large diamonds surrounded by smaller ones. The Prince Regent of Bavaria sent tapestry representing our Lord on the cross uttering the words: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and angels adoring; Don Carlos de Borbon, Duke of Madrid, a cross of diamonds, one of the most admired of the Pope's presents; from Princes of Joinville and Duke de Penthièvre, a ring with chrysolithe and diamonds; Duke of Cumberland, reliquary of St. Blase; the Prince of Arenburg, Gothic niche and statue of St. Thomas Aquinas, in the style of the thirteenth century; Princess Louise Corsini, crystal basket with gold edge, containing a magnificent rochet ornamented with lace and a red chasuble; the President of the French Re-

public, a colossal Sèvres vase, standing more than four feet high, and a beautiful inkstand; and the President of the United States, a copy of the Constitution of the United States of America.

It would be impossible to enumerate the presents that came from all quarters of the world. The Catholic authors of England sent a copy of their works, as a pledge of the active zeal with which they were fired for the spread of religion, and of devotion to the Holy See.

St. Peter Claver,

("The Apostle of the Negroes,")

Of the Society of Jesus.

(1580-1654.)

By the Rev. FATHER SOLA, of the Same Society.

I. THE PREPARATION.

The city of Cartagena, on the northern shore of South America, was, during the 17th century, the central point of the struggle in which the nations of Europe were engaged for the wealth of the new world. Its enormous harbour made it the market for all the treasures of Mexico, Peru, Potosi, and the Islands of the Western Indies, and it became the scene of the most hideous traffic that ever disgraced the name of man and cried to heaven for vengeance. But in the midst of the wickedness of Cartagena God raised up a witness to Himself. Where all was avarice, corruption, greed and cruelty, a Saint was found, who was for forty years the visible sign of God's protecting Providence to hundreds of thousands of the most abject, the most abandoned of his creatures; whose voice was the only one to pierce through that Babel of the world's loud cries, and bring a message of peace and pardon to their souls.

Peter Claver, "the slave of the slaves for ever," as he named himself in the formula of his religious profession, was born at Verdu near Barcelona, in Spain, in June of the year 1580. The child, consecrated from his birth to God by his good parents, was forestalled from his earliest days by the blessings of grace, and passed his first happy years in the simple village life. As his

character developed it showed only fresh beauty to the admiring eyes of his father and mother; who, seeing something of the promise of the gifts with which he was endowed, resolved to carry out the offering they had made, and send him to pursue his studies with a view to the priesthood. He went first to the neighbouring cathedral city of Solsona, where one of his uncles was a canon, and passed many years under the tutelage of this holy priest, laying a solid foundation of early education and advancing daily in virtue. He returned frequently to Verdu, both giving and receiving an equal amount of pleasure in these visits. It was noted that after his First Communion a change was visible in his whole deportment, a deepening of the recollection that always distinguished him, a more careful avoidance of useless conversations and games. It was clear to all that he was marked out for God, and his parents yielded to the desire of the canon of Solsona by sending him to Barcelona, at that time in much resort by scholars, where the boy would have every advantage in cultivating his many gifts. It was here that he learnt to know the Society of Jesus, and his heart was soon captivated by the holy examples offered by the lives of the Fathers at the College of Belen in that city, where at this time a great effort was being made by them to introduce the practice of frequent communion, then unusual in the country. He joined the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, and was thus initiated into the higher paths of the spiritual life, particularly by the practice of mortification, penance, works of mercy and prayer. His vocation to a religious life remained undecided in his heart, until minor orders were conferred upon him by the Bishop. He felt a desire to join the Society, and never so strongly as when praying in the Jesuits' church before a picture into which the figures of St. Ignatius (then not fifty years dead) and some of the first fathers of the Society were introduced; but the desire remained a secret between himself and God, and a deep sense of his unworthiness prevented him from offering himself for admission. At the ceremony, however, with the grace of minor orders came a flood of heavenly light

into his soul that banished hesitation. After fervent prayer he made known to the Rector his wish to join the Society, and in August, 1602, entered the noviceship at Tarragona.

No incidents are recorded of Peter's noviceship that single him out from the others who were with him during the two years he passed at Tarragona. He was a perfect novice, and therefore the most obedient, the most laborious, the humblest, and the most hidden. The lessons he learnt at Tarragona were the foundation of all his future life. Submissive, faithful, lowly was he then; and the worn-out apostle dying after years of arduous work was only more complete in his submission, more minute in his fidelity, more abject in his lowliness.

He kept a little book in which he noted sometimes the lights received in prayer. Amongst other entries occur the following four rules to be kept by a novice of the Society.

"First: to seek God in all things, and try to find Him in all.

"Second: to employ all one's strength in attaining the most perfect obedience, interior and exterior, subjecting the will and judgment to Superiors as to Christ our Lord Himself.

"Third: to do all for the greater glory of God.

"Fourth: to seek nothing in this world but what Christ our Lord sought there. As He came on earth to save souls and died for them on the cross, we should try to gain them for Him, for this joyfully offering ourselves to any labour and to death itself; receiving with contentment and joy of heart for the love of Christ any insult that may be offered us, and desiring that they may be many, yet so that we give no cause for them on our part and that there be no offence to God."

Towards the end of his noviceship, Peter, according to the usual custom of the Society of Jesus, was to make some practical proof of the love of poverty, humility and suffering he had been seeking to acquire, by setting out with a companion on a pilgrimage. They were to go unprovided with money or any provision for the journey,

begging their way and lodging at nightfall in the hospitals. The shrine that fell to Peter Claver's lot as the object of his pilgrimage was that of our Lady of Montserrat.

This sanctuary is situated on a mountain about 4000 feet in height, which, with jagged peaks, towers over the city and port of Barcelona. It has since the 9th century been a place of pilgrimage and veneration, since it was one of the chosen sites miraculously designated by the Mother of God as a spot on which she desired to be honoured. It is indeed a holy mountain; for its rugged and "serrated" sides are studded with hermitages, the abodes of prayer and penance, and half way up stands the monastery of Benedictine monks and the church containing the miraculous statue. It had another attraction in Peter Claver's eyes as in those of all pilgrims since the days of St. Ignatius: for it was here that the saint, before entering on his life-long campaign against her enemies, kept his vigil as our Lady's knight before her altar. Two or three days were spent at this shrine by Peter Claver, and to the end of his life he would recall even with tears of joy the happiness that his visit gave him, and the graces obtained for him at Montserrat by our Blessed Lady.

He made his vows on the 8th of August, 1604. "I consecrate myself to God till death," he wrote at that time, "looking on myself henceforth as a slave whose whole office lies in being at the service of his master, and working with all my soul, body and mind to please and satisfy Him in all and by all." Shortly afterwards he went to the Jesuit Seminary at Gerona, where he soon so distinguished himself by his abilites as to be employed as a professor. The following year he went to Majorca. His superiors sent him thither to pursue his course of philosophy; but God, whilst endorsing their wishes in this respect, had other designs upon this chosen servant.

Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez,* lay brother and porter

* See his Life, issued in the same series as the present.

at the College of Montexion at Palma, in Majorca, was now drawing towards the close of his life of heroic virtue. He received from God the glorious task of moulding to its great work the heart of the Apostle of the Negroes. Peter Claver's soul, when the young scholastic arrived at Majorca, was a rich soil perfectly prepared to receive the seeds of grace that were implanted in it by his holy master; and the joy of the aged saint, on meeting with the disciple who was to receive the inheritance of his spiritual wealth, was very great. The heart of Alphonsus was on fire with apostolic zeal, but age and its infirmities were weighing on him, and his work in this world was almost done. What a reward for his long years of humble patience to be able to enkindle this consuming fire in a young and ardent heart; to inspire with this unquenchable thirst for souls one whose life was still before him, to awaken to a high vocation a courage and energies capable of any work! The future was known to Rodriguez, and St. Peter, model as he was of every virtue, was in his eyes crowned with a halo invisible to all but him—a halo of heroic sacrifice, of abnegation carried to its utmost length, of devotion to a life of toil, of labour and of suffering that made him a living image of his crucified Redeemer.

Peter Claver, to whom the renown of the sanctity of Alphonsus was well known, had rejoiced exceedingly at finding that his lot was cast for awhile under the same roof: and he sought and obtained permission to have every day a quarter of an hour's talk with him. He soon found that the great things said of Alphonsus were far surpassed by the reality; and Alphonsus on his side treated his young disciple as an equal and a friend. These interviews not only trained Peter and taught him many things then, but afforded food for his soul and light for his mind throughout his whole after-life. He noted down most carefully the thoughts and teaching of Alphonsus, adding even sometimes the date of the day when the words were said; and the little books in which these notes were made he carried with him everywhere and through everything, often referring to them for strength

and renewal of spirit, and bequeathing them as treasures on his death-bed to those by whom he knew they would be valued.

Space does not allow of our reproducing here these precious notes, which contain so much of the doctrine of St. Alphonsus. Their spirit is that which characterizes the sanctity of their author, the absolute and sovereign dominion of God over us on the one hand, and the humility, submission and self-conquest that are necessary on our side, that we may not in any way be wanting in the worship we owe to our Creator. This fundamental thought of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius is the principle of all Christian as well as of all spiritual life. It makes men saints, apostles, missionaries, martyrs, and the more clearly and forcibly it takes possession of the mind the more powerfully it operates upon the will. The plenitude of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart and soul of Alphonsus gave his words a power that seemed well nigh sacramental, so marvellously did they operate in the souls of his hearers. He seemed to transmit not only the thought, but its very effect in his own soul, and thus through his words he communicated the reflection of the celestial favours he himself received. His influence upon a soul already so holy as that of Peter Claver cannot be exaggerated; and our Saint himself acknowledged it by the devotion, veneration and love he always felt for him whom he never spoke of otherwise than as his "holy master."

The will of God with regard to Peter Claver was revealed to Alphonsus, and with all the assurance thus obtained he spoke to him of the Indies—the souls perishing, the harvest plentiful, the labourers so few, the toil so great, how abundant the sufferings and the reward how overflowing. Every word he uttered found an echo in Peter's soul, and awakened an intense longing to offer himself for the mission: a longing which his humility and sense of his own worthlessness might have kept latent, had it not been brought to light by the assurance of Alphonsus that it was God's will for him to go in search of these perishing souls, redeemed by the Blood of Christ.

He was then just at the end of his course of philosophy, which he finished with great applause by being selected out of all the students to defend a public thesis—a task of which he acquitted himself to the admiration of all. Before leaving Majorca he wrote to the Provincial offering himself for the foreign missions. The answer postponed any decision on the question until he should have come to Barcelona, where he was to begin the study of theology.

Two years of waiting followed, during which time his desire for the missions increased in intensity, and he constantly renewed his request to be sent. In 1609 an order came from the Father-General of the Society of Jesus, Father Claudius Acquaviva, that from each province in Spain a missionary should be sent to recruit the recently-founded province in the New World. St. Peter Claver was selected for the province of Arragon; and in April, 1610, he set out with his companions from the port of Seville.

Two incidents in connection with his departure show how far he carried his spirit of detachment from the world. Although his parents were still living within a few leagues of Barcelona, when he passed through that city he neither warned them of his coming, nor took leave of them.

When the shores of Spain vanished from the gaze of those on the deck of the sailing-vessel that took them westward across the ocean, all memory of the land of his birth seemed to fade from the mind and heart of Peter Claver. He never spoke of the past, except some incidents of his religious life, and never asked for news.

As often happens in life, St. Peter's work on his first arrival in the New World was very different from what he anticipated. He was not yet ordained, for at Seville, having deep in his heart the desire of passing his life in the Society as a lay-brother, he had besought and obtained a postponement of ordination, which was to have been there conferred upon him.

On his arrival at Cartagena he was sent to the city

of Santa Fé de Bogota to finish his course of studies, whilst his companions, who were priests, began at once their missionary labours.

Labour, however, was not wanting to Peter Claver. The Jesuits' house at Santa Fé was scarcely founded, and was wanting in everything. The studious solitude of Barcelona seemed very removed from this seminary where, over and above his studies, Claver was called on to perform the greater part of the domestic work of the house. The student of theology was likewise porter, sacristan and cook. He was rejoiced at these offices, and he combined one with another and with his studies with extraordinary dexterity, hoping in his inmost heart that when his superiors saw his fitness for them they would allow him to continue them throughout his life. His success however in theology, under the very holy and distinguished Professor, Father Antony Augustin, was so great that his superiors, filled with admiration for his virtues and talents, decided after his final examination, to admit him to profession. The professed Fathers in the Society of Jesus are of two grades. In the higher of them, to the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience taken by all, is added the vow of obedience to the Holy See. St. Peter Claver was deeply grieved at the honour conferred upon him when he was told that he was to belong to the higher grade. He refused as far as in him lay, but was obliged to submit. His profession took place in 1622. And to the four vows he added a fifth, "to devote himself for ever to the salvation of the negroes." His third year of noviceship was passed in the newly-founded noviciate of the Society at Tunja; and at its close he returned to Cartagena, where he soon received the order to begin his retreat before his ordination. He received the priesthood in March, 1616.

Hitherto Peter Claver had but received. The formation the Society gives her sons is long; but it was complete at last, and henceforward his only thought was what he could give. The retreat which he had just made marked a change in his life that might be compared to that

from dawn to noon. Holy as his life had been, henceforth it was heroic, since every action was stamped with a supernatural fortitude that enabled him to exercise a charity that may well be called divine. His life is written in deeds not words. As we follow him through his ministry we must not expect to hear him speak. His vocation was not that of preacher or reformer. He was a living witness to God's mercy in the midst of unequalled misery, a vindication of His Providence in the face of man's oppression, a channel of His grace to hundreds of thousands of abandoned souls, an example of what in Father Faber's words, one man can accomplish who has received "by nature an enthusiastic, loving heart, and from grace the magnificent gift of living solely and entirely for God."

II. THE APOSTOLATE.

1622. At the time when St. Peter was sent to the Jesuits' College at Cartagena, that part was the Liverpool of South America. Every galleon of the then greatest kingdom in the world was forced by a law of the monarchs of Spain to touch there on their outward voyage to the Western Hemisphere. The quays of that tropical city were crowded by the sailors and merchants, the sea captains and soldiers of Spain—Italians, Flemings, Spaniards; the white man, the black, the copper-coloured, all full of work and athirst for gold and pleasure. Almost every vessel that came into the harbour had a terrible but precious cargo—a living freight, or rather a dying one—for in the tomb-like hold, in the deep, dark and fetid prison, through the long passage in the torrid heat, huddled and crushed together, were packed some eight or nine hundred men, women and children, a reeking mass of corrupting humanity.

Horrors untold had they gone through in the cruel slave-hunt, and then in the terrible march down to the African coast, leaving the prisoners starved and worn out, ill-prepared for a yet more terrible voyage. And when at length they are brought on shore, covered with open

wounds and alive with vermin, they meet with as little pity from the white man who buys them, as from the slave-catchers who had bartered them for beads and gewgaws. With their limbs almost powerless from long confinement they are dragged to the slave market to be sold again like beasts of burden. Ten or twelve thousand negroes were landed yearly at Cartagena to be transported to the West Indian Isles or to the mines of Peru.

It was to these poor wretches that St. Peter Claver for nearly forty years devoted his life. He served his apprenticeship in his heroic work under Father Alphonso de Sandoval, a most holy and zealous Jesuit, whose health had been miraculously restored to him by St. Ignatius that he might labour for the salvation of the negroes, and who for many years endeavoured with active and tender charity to lighten their load of misery, and above all, to save their souls. In seven years he is said to have baptized more than thirty thousand. At the time of Peter Claver's arrival in Cartagena, soon after his ordination, an order had just arrived from Father Mutius Vitelleschi, General of the Society, that some other Jesuits should be named to work with him, that his admirable methods of dealing with the negroes should be perpetuated. Peter Claver volunteered for this. He was accepted, and thus began his life-long work. After a year spent in labouring under Father de Sandoval the latter was called elsewhere, and the whole devolved upon Father Claver, the spirit of the master descending upon him fourfold.

His love for the negroes soon became so well known in Cartagena that upon the arrival of a slave ship the principal authorities would vie with one another in the endeavour to be the first to bring him the news, knowing that the reward was nine Masses. They loved also to see the effect upon him: his pale face lighted up with pleasure, his eyes sparkled; he grew young again. He first knelt to thank God for having brought them safely to land, and then busied himself with preparations. He enquired of what race they were that he might get the right interpreters; and then he provided what he called the

"bait," by which they might be caught, for he always said they must be spoken to first by the hand with gifts. Provided with a large store of refreshing drinks, fruit, preserves, lemons, brandy and tobacco, he would go down to the quay and wait the first moment when it would be possible to go on board. The negroes who survived the horrors of the passage were almost crazed by its suffering. They thought that fresh atrocities awaited them, and were prepared for any cruelty. Claver appeared to these besotted or ferocious natures as an angel of charity, whose greeting was the first to meet them on this foreign shore. There was no mistaking the genuine love that shone in Father Claver's eyes, as he clasped them in his arms and ministered so tenderly to their wants. They recognized it, and when they heard his assurances by the mouth of those of their own nation whom he brought with him, that no harm was meant them, and that he would himself be their protector, friend and father, they listened as if spell-bound. He then distributed the provisions, and next enquired whether any children had been born during the voyage, and whether there were any at the point of death. The children he baptized, and if the sick were already Christians he confessed and prepared them for death, if not Christians he instructed and baptized them; many, as it seemed, only waited for this grace to die. He remained a long time with those who were ill, feeding them with his own hands, paying them every attention that their extreme need and his own charity could suggest, winning their hearts and those of the bystanders, who almost envied the sick when they saw how tenderly Father Claver cared for them.

When the day came for the disembarkation of the negroes, Peter Claver was again at the quay with interpreters and provisions as before. As soon as the poor creatures descried him they scrambled up the masts and rigging to get a better sight of him, clapping their hands by way of salute. He would hold out his hand to them to help them to jump down, would receive them in his arms and give them the kiss of peace. He had provided low carts for the sick and he saw to their being

conveyed to these, and thus when all was ready he took them to their dwellings. These, alas! were scarcely better than the hold of the ship they had quitted, but at least they were not confined there for so long.

Early next morning Father Claver, after saying Mass, set out in his thread-bare cassock, a bronze crucifix upon his breast, carrying two bags slung across his back, and in his hand a staff surmounted by a cross. One of the bags contained a surplice, a stole, holy oils, rosaries, etc. The other, biscuits, fruit, brandy, scented-water and other comforts or refreshments for the sick. Though thus laden he walked so quickly that his companion and the interpreters could scarcely keep pace with him. His first enquiries were for the sick, and when he had done all he could for them he looked after the rest.

Having assembled them all in a large court-yard he erected an altar on which he placed pictures fitted to give their dull minds some idea of the truths he was about to teach them. The central and most conspicuous represented the Crucifixion; streams of blood ran from the five wounds and were collected in a precious vase by a priest who was about to baptize therefrom a negro who awaited that grace upon his knees in an attitude of deep devotion. Cardinals and kings in stately robes assisted at the ceremony. On one side of this group were shown, all shining in light, the negroes who had received baptism, on the other, hideous and deformed, those who had rejected it.

Before beginning his Catechism he took each negro separately to examine whether he had been baptised. This he was obliged to do quite privately, because he found by experience that if they could hear one another's answers they would follow like sheep and all give the same reply. The result of this examination was to divide the negroes into three classes: those who had been baptised, those who had not, and those whose baptism was doubtful; he distinguished them by medals which he put around their neck.

He then commenced the instruction. The negroes were ranged around, seated on benches he had himself

provided for them. Father Claver taking his cross in his hands would kneel down in their midst, and prayed there silently for some minutes, his face lighted up with heavenly fire. Then raising his right hand he made very solemnly a large sign of the cross, saying at the same time the usual words. This action and the words he repeated several times, and then with his interpreters he went in turn to every negro, making everyone sign himself in the same way with the holy sign. He would give sweetmeats as a reward to those who did it well, and gently find fault with the others; nor would he ever pass on to another until the last had by frequent repetition learnt his lessons perfectly. From this beginning he led them on to acts of faith which in their turn gave rise to acts of hope, and these to acts of charity and contrition. His own example acted in a marvellous way upon their untaught minds, and they caught the reflection of his ardent faith and burning charity. He took advantage of these dispositions to rouse in them a hatred of idolatry and desire for baptism. "See, my children," he would say, "you must do like the serpent who shakes off his old skin that he may have another and far more beautiful one:" and to make his meaning clearer he would take between finger and thumb the skin of his hand as if he were going to tear it off. The poor slaves whose attention was completely rivetted upon him, and who followed his minutest action, would then make use of the same signs to show they understood, and were ready to strip off their old idolatry.

But the deepest impression was made when, crucifix in hand, he spoke to them of the great love of the God who thus died for them. His words were accompanied by such floods of tears of love and sorrow, that seeing them the negroes broke forth into sobs and lamentations and even cries of grief. He concluded always with an act of contrition usually in these words: "My Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of God, You are my Father, my Mother and all my good. I love You with all my heart and am very sorry for having offended You; I love You dearly, dearly." Tears drowned his voice in saying these words;

the negroes wept with him, and thus ended the instruction for that day.

Shortly after, when other instructions of the same nature had prepared them sufficiently, a day was appointed for their baptism, and all possible solemnity was given to the ceremony. The number of baptisms thus administered cannot be known with certainty, but it probably exceeded four hundred thousand. It was a work always to be renewed, as relays of negroes succeeded one another without intermission during the forty years of Peter Claver's ministry.

The good father was not satisfied with making Christians of the negroes; he would have them *good* Christians, and to effect this he followed them into all the detail of their lives. It was remarked of him that he seemed to be everywhere at once, if not miraculously, at least by the incredible speed and fervour with which he went from one part of the city to the other, to visit the sick or instruct the ignorant. No one could keep up with him, and he was obliged to change his companion two or three times in the course of an afternoon. The climate of Cartagena is a cause of great suffering to its inhabitants, but scorching sun, drenching rain and biting wind never had the power to deter Peter Claver from a single charitable visit. Night as well as day was devoted to this ministry. "The other Fathers," he would say, "work hard and need their rest. I who do nothing have no need of sleep;" and so when the bell for a sick call rang at night, for his nights were passed in prayer, he was always the first to answer it and obtain the task he coveted.

Negroes, even when in health, are repulsive on account of their natural odour and uncivilized habits, but when in illness they become intolerable. The acts of charity which Peter Claver performed for them are such that we can scarcely bear to bring them home to ourselves. Weak hearts sicken even at hearing of what the heroic self-conquest of this true lover of the cross performed for these poor outcast children of our common Father. No wonder that his charity was rewarded by the gift of

miracles, and that at his prayer souls that had already left the body should return until they had received baptism or absolution, and their salvation was thus ensured. Three miracles of this kind are witnessed to, and innumerable cures were granted to his prayers. That we may learn how Peter Claver taught himself to overcome the natural loathing for what is nauseous, as strong in him as in other men, let us take courage and follow him to one abode of misery from which we may fancy what the rest were like. He was once called to the house of a rich trader to confess a negro who was covered all over with sores; the stench that they exhaled was so fetid that the sufferer was placed apart in an out-house. His very appearance was so horrible that no one dared to approach him, and strange to say, even Peter Claver, when he saw him, was seized with a repugnance that made him recoil with horror. The Father was followed unknown to himself, by the master of the house, curious to witness the charity of which he had often heard. He saw the recoil of nature, but he saw also how it was met. Peter Claver withdrew a little, and gave himself a severe discipline. "Is this the way," he said to himself, "that you refuse to touch a brother redeemed by the Precious Blood; but you shall pay for it and learn charity." Then he came back, and approaching the sick man upon his knees, devoutly and most tenderly kissed the loathsome sores and cleansed them with his tongue; he gave refreshments to the sufferer, heard his confession, remained a long time by his side, and left him full of consolation. When he came out, his face was very calm, and a grave and sweet serenity was remarked by all.

Sometimes when, with the sick, he required the assistance of others, and the foul atmosphere prevented them from being able to approach it, they found it changed into a sweet and refreshing air when no natural means could have effected the improvement. His cloak, which he used often to spread beneath the leprous and revolting sick far from contracting any unpleasant smell was fragrant with a perfume of sweet flowers. It was quite a common thing with him to apply his lips to and

to lick the most infected sores. He saw Jesus Christ in all His suffering members, and treated Him in them with the tenderness he would have bestowed on the wounds of his Master.

His eyes were always on the negroes and their conduct; and his presence and even the mere mention of his name were a restraint to keep them within bounds. If their dances, which he allowed as long as they were not indecent, exceeded the limits of propriety, he was no longer the loving Father but the avenger of God's law, and holding on high in one hand a crucifix, in the other a discipline, he would rain down a shower of blows on the dancers and musicians, who were glad to escape from them even with the loss of their instruments. These he took possession of, and restored them only after an alms had been given to the poor of the hospital. He was always the strict guardian of their morals, and saw to their observance of the laws of God and of the Church.

It was not the negroes of Cartagena alone who were the objects of his care. Every year he undertook most laborious missions into the surrounding country, travelling with a negro interpreter whom he obeyed as his superior, deferring to him on all points and leaving to him the ordering of the journey. He baptized, heard confessions, preached from morning till night, travelling across desert wastes of country from one settlement to the other, until he returned to Cartagena worn to a skeleton from excessive toil, but only anxious to resume the labours he had been forced to abandon for a time in the city itself. Here, the poor in the hospitals, and especially the lepers, the prisoners, the soldiers, the merchants, all classes in short were in turn the objects of his zeal, for he was the apostle not only of the negroes but of all Cartagena. He made himself the peacemaker between enemies, he converted heretics; in short wherever God's work was to be done at the cost of sacrifice, Peter Claver was there to do it with an energy, love, and devotedness that won over the most obdurate by the sweet persuasive force of sanctity. No day passed without the exercise of some heroic act of charity.

III. THE REWARD.

Let us turn from the streets and squares, from the busy money-loving crowd, from the misery, the cupidity and the worldliness of Cartagena, to follow its Apostle into his cell in the Jesuits' College of that city, to study for a little while his life as a religious and his life with God, thus tracing to its source all the charity and self-sacrifice we have been witnessing.

The College of Cartagena was poor, both in the means of subsistence and the number of its Fathers; but whilst existence there was a struggle that entailed unnumbered hardships upon its members, it was a school in which they were formed to no common measure of holiness. Peter Claver was at one time Minister in the College, that is, the second in command, and his duty therefore was to supply all the material wants of his brethren. At another time he had the charge of the formation of the lay-brother novices. Whatever his employment, he was always the servant of all; and as for so long a time each day he required the presence of a companion and the lay-brothers were very few and very busy, he always made time for the one assigned him as companion, by doing a part of his work. Thus he was sometimes in the sacristy, at others in the kitchen or the lodge, but whatever the office he would always respectfully take off his hat before the brother in charge, and beg him to tell him what to do.

His cell was for a long time a mere closet, too dark to allow him to see to write in it. His bed was always the hide of an ox or a common mat, his pillow a block of wood. But poor as this bed was he left it usually to sleep upon the bare floor. He would sometimes for months together have in his room one of his negro interpreters, who was ill with a disease that made it almost intolerable to be near him, and Father Claver would nurse him there with the tenderness of a mother.

Let us follow him into his cell when, after the almost superhuman toil of the day, he is at length alone. We

shall see him take out a crown of very sharp thorns and place it on his head, for this is his usual practice when alone. He always says his Office thus when in his room. The night is not for him a time of sleep, but of prayer and penance, and the sleep he took was but of two or three hours.

He was often absorbed the whole night long in contemplation so as to be unconscious even of the violent thunderstorms prevalent in that climate. His neighbour, Brother Gonzalez, under the influence of fear, would sometimes rush into Father Claver's room when the storm was very violent, and go close up to him for protection without distracting him for an instant from his intercourse with God. The rector used to make his confession to Father Claver, and for this purpose would occasionally go to his room at night. Opening the door gently, he often found him with his crown of thorns upon his head, a rope around his neck, and so absorbed in God that not to interrupt his prayer he would withdraw unobserved. He used to say he did not know when Father Claver's prayers were over, for at whatever hour he came to him he always found him so engaged.

Every Friday St. Peter Claver would leave his room in the dead of night with the crown of thorns upon his head, the rope around his neck, and a heavy cross upon his shoulders, and thus clothed in the likeness of Jesus Christ he made a penitential pilgrimage throughout the house. He took the discipline every night three times to blood, once before he went to sleep, again at midnight and a third time when the signal was given for the community to rise. The rough hair shirt he always wore was the only dressing he ever applied to those self-inflicted wounds.

Three times it happened that, the door being opened in the middle of the night, Father Claver was thus seen raised some height above the ground in the same attitude in which he had been kneeling in prayer; his eyes were fixed with intense love upon the crucifix he held in his hands, and he was surrounded by a soft, yet brilliant light. He remained for some hours in this posi-

tion and then gently descended to the floor. The same unearthly radiance was often seen around his head when he was saying Mass, when visiting the hospitals, and when he was assisting criminals at their execution. It was so brilliant that no one could look on it without being dazzled.

The Passion of our Lord was the strongest attraction of his soul, and he tried, as far as possible, that in imitation of his Lord no part of his body should be without suffering. To attain this, besides the austerities already spoken of he bound his limbs about with horse-hair cords studded with iron points, and these he always wore. But if his penances were fearful the mortification of his senses was no less astonishing. During the fifty years he spent in religion he never allowed his eyes a single glance which was prompted by mere curiosity. The window of a cell he occupied for many years looked out upon the port, but he never opened it, nor looked out at what passed beneath. He never indulged himself with the fragrance of a flower and never tasted fruit. The guard he obtained over his senses was so great that he never made a movement to drive away mosquitoes or other stinging insects, but rather invited their approach. In his confessional they swarmed about him so that he was sometimes covered with blood from their stings. He would only laughingly say, if any one made a remark about it, that they were very useful, as they bled him without need of a lancet. He used similar devices to throw a veil over all his virtues.

Before the first Mass, often at three o'clock in the morning, Claver was already in his confessional, which he had chosen as the most inconvenient one in the Church, close to the door and exposed all day to sun or rain. He often remained in it so many hours that when the College gates were closed at night he had to be carried almost fainting with exhaustion to his room. The negroes came to him in crowds, and whilst there were any of them to confess no one else had a chance of being heard. All the early hours of the morning he passed in his confessional, for it was his custom always to say the latest Mass.

He prepared for celebrating the Holy Sacrifice by first making his confession, which he did shedding abundant tears of sorrow; then whatever his occupations might be he spent a full half hour in prayer, and he never spoke to any one from that time till he had finished his thanksgiving. His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, always most remarkable, was especially shown whilst he was saying Mass. when his whole appearance was so expressive of the fervour of his soul that all who assisted at it were penetrated with a like feeling.

Whenever he could, St. Peter Claver's great happiness was to take his meals with the beggars at the door. He would eat with them gladly out of the same dish and when the meal was over would collect and wash the plates and cups, sweep up the crumbs, in fact make himself the slave of the poor as he was the slave of negroes. He never ate more at dinner than the amount those who fast take for their collation; scraps of bread collected from the tables, with a potato, were his ordinary food. One evening, whilst he was Minister of the house, entering the refectory for supper, he asked the cook to give him the contents of an earthen vessel containing some broth made of olives. It was brought to him and having thrown in a morsel of bread he thanked the brother, saying it was excellent. The following evening he made the same request, and after this the cook's curiosity was excited, as it was so unusual for Father Claver to ask for or to praise his food. So he tasted the decoction, and was immediately seized with violent pains and sickness. He looked into the vessel and there he found the bodies of large spiders and other insects in a state of decomposition, and so he immediately threw away the remainder. The third evening the Father again enquired for his favourite dish, and when he heard its fate: "God's will be done," he said, "but there was no need to throw it away, for it was very good."

The time of the siesta, or afternoon rest, so needed in hot climates, he employed in teaching catechism to his interpreters and catechists, and his patience with these men was not one of the least marvellous of his virtues.

During recreation time, when with the Community, he was always engaged in making rosaries for the negroes. His devotion to our Blessed Lady was only second to that which he felt for Her Divine Son, and he spared no pains and no opportunity to inculcate it upon all, especially upon children, whom he loved to train up in tender devotion to Her whom he used most frequently to speak of as "Mother of fair love."

Two maxims which he had learnt from Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez were deeply engraved upon his heart, and firmly and consistently did he practise them. They were discovered amongst his writings after his death in these words:

First maxim. "When I am persecuted or calumniated I have either deserved it or not. If I have, why do I complain? ought I not rather to correct my fault and seek pardon from God? If I have not deserved it, I should rejoice at it, and be grateful to God for this opportunity of suffering something for His love, and for the rest I must be silent."

Second maxim. "When crosses or opposition come why do I not imitate the ass? When he is ill-treated he is silent; when he is neglected, over-laden, starved, despised, he is still silent. Whatever is said of it, whatever is done to it, it is still silent and makes no complaint. So likewise should a true servant of God act and say with David: 'I am become like a beast of burden before Thee.'"

It seemed indeed to be the one aim of Peter Claver's life to try how low and despicable he could make himself appear before men. We will give one example to show how far his humility was carried when it was a question of taking correction. During Holy Week he saw in the Jesuits' Church a lady whose dress befitted neither the season of penance nor the House of God, and was quite unbecoming a Christian woman. His zeal was enkindled, and he reproached her with the style of her dress and suggested that it was unsuited to the time, her condition and her age. This last remark was more than she could stand, and she

flew into a passion and gave way to such angry words that she attracted the attention of the sacristan, who began to take her part and blame the Father's indiscretion. A moment afterwards the Rector came up and either because he could not otherwise appease the lady's anger, or because he really thought that Father Claver was in the wrong, reprimanded severely his imprudence and his allowing himself to be carried away by the impetuosity of his zeal. Without one word to justify himself Father Claver knelt down before his Superior. He kissed his feet, asked pardon for the scandal which he had given, and begged that a penance proportioned to the fault might be imposed upon him. The lady was so surprised and so confused at what had occurred through her conduct that she made a complete change in her way of life, and was henceforward as edifying as she had been the contrary.

Father Claver was in this, as in all other occasions, a living model of his own maxim on humility: "The man who is truly humble desires contempt, and without seeking to appear humble he tries to appear to deserve to be humbled."

But what was the reward that his Lord and Master bestowed upon His faithful followers? It was one that this true lover of the cross would have chosen out of all others, the only one indeed that he deemed deserving of the name; the privilege of pressing closer to his Saviour crucified, of feeling more the pain He bore for us, of sharing more abundantly in His ignominies, His abandonment, His shame. It would be difficult to imagine a trial that would cut the Apostle of the Negroes more keenly to the heart than that of being forbidden to open for them by baptism the path of salvation; yet when a storm was raised against the Jesuits in Cartagena by their enemies, all its violence fell upon Peter Claver, and he was accused of re-baptizing those who had already received the sacrament. The accusation was quite unjustifiable, but the Visitor-General of the Society of Jesus forbade him in future to baptize, and the saint thought it better to submit in silence than to protest his innocence. He never asked to baptize until

the order was withdrawn. There was a time when every one, even his superiors, seemed against him. Not only did his own children, the negroes, abuse his patience, but their masters encouraged them to treat him with insult, alleging that he made them lose their time. Although many of his religious brethren had the greatest veneration for his holiness, some of them were allowed to be blind to his merit and not only made complaints of the additional labour caused by his zeal and charity, but made him responsible for any ignorance or mistakes on the part of negroes instructed by him. They bitterly reproached him and drew on him reprimands so public and so severe that it required a patience like his own to bear them meekly. Once a Provincial who was much irritated at hearing a young slave spoken of as "Father Claver's negro," expressed his displeasure with much warmth and even bitterness. But the Father listened without making any reply, although he had no other connection with the pretended fault than that of having got the situation for the little negro in the house. Another superior, who was prejudiced against him, expressed contempt for his opinion, saying he was ignorant and did not even understand Latin. Untrue as the taunt was he made no answer but to acknowledge his ignorance. "What does it matter," he said to some who were surprised at his serenity, "whether one is thought learned or ignorant? But it is very necessary to be humble and obedient." The last four years of his life were passed in almost total solitude and inaction. In 1650, when he was seventy years old, having until that age laboured with unremitting ardour, he was attacked by a very severe illness, and although he recovered he never regained his strength. From that time he was confined almost entirely to his room, and for many months before the end could neither feed himself nor even rise from his bed. Although unable to say Mass from the palsy that shook his frame he still made his confession daily and dragged himself or was carried to the Church to hear Mass and receive Communion, and as long as it was possible he continued to hear Confessions.

As his weakness increased his patience was more and more exercised. The plague had ravaged Cartagena and many Jesuits had succumbed to it; those who survived were overburdened with work and were quite unable to give Father Claver the attention they would have desired. He was confided to the care of some clumsy negroes, especially of a rough and awkward boy whose attendance caused him every kind of suffering and made his life a martyrdom. Sometimes the servant neglected to bring him either food or drink for days together. His room was left unswept for weeks so as to become uninhabitable, and to this negative unkindness was added the positive barbarity of blows and savage treatment. Yet Father Claver never complained; no shade came over the calm tranquillity of his expression. "My sins," he used to say, "deserve infinitely more." Still his tender conscience reproached him with feelings that human nature must needs experience, though no expression of them was ever allowed. "My impatience during my illness," he once said, "has robbed me of whatever merit I had gained." Sometimes he would express his sorrow that the boy would not help him to rise when he wanted to go to Mass or to visit the Blessed Sacrament. The efforts he made to do so unassisted caused him many a fall. The noise was overheard by the Brother in the sacristy below, and brought him to his aid. But finding that this Brother in helping him to dress treated him too respectfully and considerately, he would dismiss him with many thanks and call for the negro, whose rough usage was far more to his mind.

Two great consolations came to lighten the burden of these painful years of weary helplessness. One was the arrival of Father de Fariña, who was sent by the King of Spain to succeed him in the work of baptizing the negroes. "What!" he cried, "come to baptize the negroes! that is good news," and his face beamed with joy, as he struck his stick upon the floor. He rose at once and dragged himself to the room the Father occupied, knelt before him and kissed his feet, congratulating him on his employment. When Father de Fariña learnt that the holy old

man before him was no other than Father Claver, he felt their places should be reversed; and he in turn fell at the feet of the servant of God protesting that he should always look upon him as his master.

The other consolation was the printed life of Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez, which reached him eight months before his death and was a great delight to him, recalling as it did so many memories of his holy master, and ensuring that the veneration he himself felt for the saintly lay-brother would be widely propagated.

An order arrived from Spain to pull down the Jesuit College, but Father Claver received a distinct knowledge from God, that before this happened, he himself should be safe in the eternal home not made with hands. The demolition was to begin at once and there seemed no immediate prospect of Father Claver's death. Yet he spoke of it as near at hand, and begged that he might be buried "by his confessional near the church door and at the feet of his dear negroes," a request which, however, was not granted. On Sunday, Sept. 6th, 1654, he was assisted for the last time to the church, by two negroes, and after Communion returned in the same way to his room. As he passed the sacristy he said to the Brother: "I am going to die, do you want anything for the next life?" "That your reverence may recommend me with this house and city to God," was the reply. Father Claver passed the remainder of the day in close converse with God, and towards evening was attacked by a violent fever that seemed to be rather the effect of his very ardent love acting on his weakened constitution than a natural malady. During the night unconsciousness came on, and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was administered early the next morning, but the holy Father never spoke again and gave no sign of consciousness. His blessed soul, thus purified by suffering, passed to its eternal and most glorious reward on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

Strange to say, no sooner was he dead than a fever of enthusiasm seized upon the city to do honour and to reverence as a saint the man who during his long

sickness had lain abandoned by nearly all. The college was literally besieged by crowds who came to venerate his remains, and through the streets the children went crying loudly, "the Saint is dead, the Saint is dead." Above all his own negroes came from all quarters of the city and its neighbourhood to testify their love and gratitude, and the authorities outdid each other in public and substantial expressions of esteem. Honour was in truth his due, for he was a conqueror indeed. He gained innumerable souls for God and heaven, and he was a victor in that hardest and most obstinate of fights, the struggle against self-love, self-interest and self-will. No wonder that when a palm branch was placed upon his body after death, the dead stiff fingers should unclose, as they were seen to do, and grasp a symbol to which he had so true a light.

There was no controlling the crowds who thronged into the Jesuits' Church from the time the holy body was laid out there. All day they surged to and fro in the endeavour to approach near the remains and kiss the hands and feet that had worked so many miracles of love. But towards evening, when the negroes and the poorer classes freed from their work came to add to the crowd, and insisted upon looking once again upon the father they had lost, the Jesuits unclasped the hands, and removing the palm branch and the chalice, extended the arms in the form of a cross that the hands might the more easily be reached.

As night approached and the crowd continued to increase, the city guard was sent to defend the body, and the Augustinians replaced the Jesuits who were worn out with their struggle against the people. An effort to cover the body with a pall was entirely frustrated by the crowd, and when on the following morning the moment came for removing it to the tomb prepared in the wall of the Church, it was necessary to employ the device of distributing relics of the saint at the Church door, to make it possible for the removal to be accomplished.

Three magnificent funeral services, with panegyrics, were celebrated with all possible pomp; the last of these

was peculiarly touching as it was a spontaneous expression of the gratitude of the negroes. They assisted at it most solemnly, arranged according to their different nationalities, and spared nothing that could add to its pomp.

Multitudes of miraculous cures attested the sanctity of the servant of God, but space allows only one or two to be mentioned here. St. Peter's spiritual daughter Doña Isabella de Betancour was suffering from a disease of the eyes that prevented her, in spite of her great wish to see the saint once more, from venturing out the day following his death. Her mother, however, full of faith in his powerful intercession, persuaded her to go. Doña Isabella touched her eyes with his holy hand and the ophthalmia was instantly cured.

Bartholomew Sanchez was lying sick unto death at the hospital of St. Sebastian. His brother who was nursing him, through great veneration for St. Peter Claver, left the hospital to assist at the funeral. On his return he gave Bartholomew a little sprig of rosemary which he had taken from the bier, telling him to recommend himself to Father Claver who was able to cure him at once. Bartholomew, full of faith, put the rosemary to his mouth, and when his brother, alarmed at seeing him about to eat it, exclaimed against his imprudence, he replied: "It comes from a saint; it cannot hurt me." When he had eaten it, he said it tasted very sweet and not at all like rosemary. Then he fell asleep and awoke quite well. The miracles continued in such constant succession and Father Claver's reputation for sanctity was so universal, that three years after his death juridical informations were taken for his canonization. They continued for three years during which the facts related in his life were deposed to on oath by witnesses worthy of credit. These informations were then sent to Rome, and in 1747, Benedict XIV. decreed the heroic character of the virtues of the servant of God, and declared him venerable.

The beatification of our saint was the first which was celebrated in the pontificate of Pius IX. It took place with all possible solemnity and splendour on Sept. 21st,

1851. His canonization was reserved to add to the lustre of the Jubilee of our Holy Father, Leo XIII., in 1888.

In conclusion, one word may be added about the tomb of the saint. His body at its burial was placed in a coffin of cedar wood in a niche made in the wall of one of the chapels in the Jesuits' church of Cartagena. This niche was opened in 1657, when the body, which had been laid in quicklime was found, with the exception of a portion of the head which was somewhat injured, entire and without the least mark of corruption, although the coffin, the clothes and even the ironwork were completely decayed. The remains were then placed in a new shrine and transferred to a more honourable position in the same chapel.

When the College was no longer occupied by the Jesuits, after their expulsion it was turned into a hospital. Now in our own days the Fathers are returning to the Republic of Colombia. In 1887, on arriving at Cartagena, they found that the Church of St. Peter Claver was completely abandoned. Yet the negroes were still faithful to the memory of their apostle, for a negress had the charge of it, burning before his tomb a little lamp, the oil for which was supplied by subscriptions from the negroes. These good souls, the descendants of those whom St. Peter Claver had evangelized, are still very devout to him. They maintain that he was of the same colour as themselves, and pay great veneration to a picture that represents him as the true type of a negro. The Church in which his remains repose is about to be restored, and his relics rescued from their long neglect.

May the Apostle of the Negroes obtain for all who labour for souls in the newly-opened continent of Africa, or in the countries of America, the grace to carry on his work for the salvation of the negro, with some share of his spirit of zeal and self-devotion!

St. Alphonsus Rodriguez,

of the Society of Jesus.

(1531—1617.)

BY THE REV. FRANCIS GOLDIE,

OF THE SAME SOCIETY.

I. Life in the World.

THESE are days of equality, when every man claims to be as good as his neighbour, and possibly a great deal better. Democracy disapproves of class privileges and class distinctions. Feudal—old-world—notions about society are quite at a discount. But with all this there has never been an age when, even in young countries like the great Republic across the Atlantic, social inequalities were so great, when the rich were so rich and the poor were so poor. So too, never has there been a time, since Christianity took the place of Paganism, when the poor chafed so much under their lot, and the rich made such a display of their wealth. In New York as in London, the man who has amassed the largest fortune is the man most envied and most thought of; and if in both cities much public spirit, much philanthropy is shown, still immense sums are expended in mere sumptuous living and pretentious luxury. No wonder that any theories evelled at riches find a ready hearing with the starved

and the envious, or that schemes the most untried and the most impracticable are preached with an appearance of truth, as sure ways to bring within the reach of all the plenty which is in the possession of the few. Such things have been before, and will be to the end; and the unequal distribution of the good things in this world will always be a puzzle to the social economist, and a spiritual stumbling-block to many. But the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in proportion as it is believed and realized and brought into daily life, can give a real solution to the riddle, can keep the rich from an abuse of their riches, and the poor from discontent with their poverty. Catholicity, when not merely professed, but thoroughly practised, as we still find it in some Catholic countries, or as it was in days gone by before the revolt of the sixteenth century, gives true equality, while always recognizing the natural and necessary distinctions between man and man; and makes of one heart and one mind the rich and the poor, the governing and the governed.

So to-day, the Church has just glorified a poor, humble old lay-brother, who, in out-of-the-way Majorca, for twenty years or more kept the gate of a provincial college. And as this humble position and this servitude were freely embraced, all the more does it point the lesson of the Church's honours. "He hath exalted the humble, and the rich He hath sent empty away," were the inspired words of the poor Maiden of Nazareth, which declare that God glorifies for ever those who walk in the footsteps of His Incarnate Son; but to those who make their heaven here on earth He says, "Amen, you have had your reward." What truer way to redress the apparently unjust balances of life?

Segovia was a busy place, a Leeds without its smoke, in the early part of the bustling sixteenth century. With a great historical past, the beautiful old city in the heart of Spain was then noisy with the looms of the cloth-weavers, and with the cries of the shepherds who drove in their flocks of sheep from the gaunt hills around. It

was more than this. Before Philip II. made Madrid, it was one of the capitals of Spain. Diego Rodriguez, an honest cloth-merchant of the city, was blessed with a large family, some eleven children, of whom the second boy, Alonso, or, as we call him, Alphonsus, is the subject of our story. Alphonsus was born on the 25th of July, 1531, St. James' Day. Diego was noted for the holiness of his household. The frequent Communions of his family—so unusual in the days before the Council of Trent—gave them a reputation for piety among the townsfolk; and when in 1541 Blessed Peter Favre, of the new Society of Jesus, with another priest came to preach a mission to Segovia, they gratefully accepted the hospitality of Diego. After their fruitful work was done, he offered them a country house of his own—for there were then hardly any Jesuit houses in Spain—wherein to rest from their labours. Diego sent Alphonsus with the Fathers to wait upon them, and they in return taught the little boy to serve Mass and to say his beads, and prepared him for his first confession. Though he was then but about eleven years old, they found him not only of a charming disposition and anxious to learn, but an apt and clever scholar.

1544. As soon as Diego heard of the wonderful reform that a religious of the new Society, the humble Francis de Villanueva, was effecting in the great university of Alcalá, he sent his two boys to study under his care. But before the scholastic year has passed their father died, and the young Alphonsus was recalled home, and, though not fifteen, had to go into his late father's business. He had not got to the highest class, called rhetoric—had not, in a word, finished his classical education. It was not, however, till he was twenty-three that his mother retired from the business.

1557. Spite of Alphonsus' integrity and high principle, his affairs began to go wrong. The foreign wars of Charles V., the easily-got gold of America, and still more, an utterly false system of financial legislation, were ruining the wool trade, and in fact all the manu-

factures of Spain. When Alphonsus was twenty-seven, he was induced to take to wife a girl, well born and pious, from the hill country near Segovia, whose dowry it was hoped would save from ruin the family business. But things only grew worse. Diego, the eldest brother, who had remained at the university and there completed his studies, had obtained the degree of LL.D., taken to the law, and settled at Seville, died in the flower of his youth just as his family conceived high hopes of him, leaving behind him a widow. Then Alphonsus lost a sweet little daughter; and after a long illness, which was to him a cause of very great expense, his young wife died, and his only consolation in this world was the sole surviving child, a boy.

1559. Two years after his marriage the Jesuit Fathers, at the earnest request of priests and people, had established themselves permanently at Segovia. A gentleman of Segovia, who had been a friend of St. Ignatius of Loyola when at Rome, welcomed the religious of the Order to his native city. The first comers were Father Christopher Rodriguez and Father Lewis Santander, whose preaching was a source of a complete renewal of religious life in the city. Father Lewis was appointed the first Rector of the college, and when St. Teresa came to Segovia to found there one of her houses, he was both her counsellor and her confessor. Naturally enough, the Rodriguez family had been among the earliest to put themselves under the spiritual care of the Fathers of the Society. About 1563, Alphonsus lost his mother, and our Saint—whose domestic troubles had shown him the vanity of the world, though his life had always been a pious one—gave himself up entirely to prayer and to penance. He realized what still remained of his goods, and retired with his child into a part of the house, his first home, of which another portion was occupied by two of his sisters, whose holiness merited for them the name of "the blessed." Seen in the clear light of his new grace, Alphonsus looked on his past life as utterly misspent, and condemned himself for not having heeded God and his own salvation.

1563. On the morning of the feast of the Assumption, when in the Jesuit church preparing with all care for Holy Communion, Alphonsus was rapt into the third heaven, and the glories of God's heavenly court, with which he was to become so familiar, were for the first time made manifest to him. He saw his God seated on a throne, surrounded by countless glorious spirits and crowned with a diadem of untold glory; while our Blessed Lady, with his guardian angel and his patron saint, St. Francis of Assisi, led him to the feet of his Lord, to lay his offering before his Divine Master. When he came to himself, he was so dazed with what he had seen, that he could hardly find his way out of the church.

1564. He made a general confession of his whole life to Father Baptist Martinez, S.J., and on the feast of Our Lady of the Snow, the 5th of August, he began to go regularly every week to the sacraments, a very rare practice in those days. He kept every Friday and Saturday as a strict fast, scourged himself continually, and wore a hair-shirt, which covered him from his shoulders to his knees. This period of penance and profound contrition lasted for three long years. But God as usual came to comfort the soul which sought Him so earnestly. Alphonsus recited the whole Rosary every day on his knees. As he said his Our Father a beautiful crimson rose used to appear before him, and at each Hail Mary a white rose, all of wondrous beauty and fragrance; and when his sisters learnt this favour from him, they taught him how to meditate upon the various mysteries. Morning and evening he gave two hours to this pious practice, and spent an extra quarter of an hour in thanksgiving. He then heard Mass with deep devotion. Later on he passed from vocal prayer to regular meditation, and without ceasing to say his Rosary, gave four hours to strictly mental prayer. The great truths, Death, Hell, Judgment, were for his first years the constant subject of his thoughts. He then passed on to the contemplation of the life and sufferings of our Lord. In reward for his diligence in

prayer, it was vouchsafed to him to drink of the chalice of the Lord's Passion, by sharing in a marvellous but most real manner in the mental and physical agonies of his crucified Lord, while he was meditating upon them.

So impressed was he with the realities of the other world, that he preferred, like the sainted Queen Blanche, to see his own dear boy, whom he loved so deeply, die while yet innocent, rather than live to offend God. This wish found its expression in an ardent prayer, which received a speedy answer; for, a month after this, the little child went to Heaven. Thus the last link which bound him to the world was broken. Already Alphonsus, after the vision of Assumption Day, had made up his mind that he would ultimately become a religious. One night, whether in a dream or in imagination, he saw a dense flight of birds, black and hideous, which darkened the whole sky, until a beautiful white dove, with the Holy Name written in silver on its breast, appeared in their midst. Three times they attacked it, and three times it struck them down. They fell like hail before its power, and the survivors at last flew away. Father Martinez, convinced that it was a sign from God, begged long and earnestly in prayer for light to unriddle its meaning, and was at length convinced that it signified that his penitent was to be assailed by the foulest attacks of the devil, but that under the shield of the Society he was to come off victorious. It was, however, all in vain that St. Alphonsus sought admission from the Fathers at Segovia. His health seemed so utterly broken down by his excessive austerities as to make him useless as a lay-brother, while his education was too defective for one of his age to be received as a scholastic—one destined for Holy Orders. In one so convinced as was our Saint that he was called by God, no small difficulty could stay him. So he parted with all his fortune and divided his substance between his two sisters—his mother was then dead—only just keeping enough to help him on his long journey, and

he left his country and kinsfolk to try if his old friend, Father Santander, who had been made Rector of the new Jesuit College at Valencia, would consent to receive him.

1569. It was not the beauty of the garden of Spain that attracted the pilgrim to that bright and flower-girt city, but only the one wish to place his neck under the straight but sweet yoke of his Lord and Love. Father Santander, who knew his worth, encouraged him in this holy desire, but advised him to get ordained priest as soon as possible, so as to obtain the more easily admission into the Society. As he had made himself poor for for Christ's sake, Alphonsus was forced to take a situation in the house of a noble lady as body-servant to her son. Meanwhile, in spite of the jeers of the boys of his class, this man of nearly forty set himself, as St. Ignatius had done before him, to begin the elements of Latin grammar. But among the students he met with a man of his own age, seemingly of his own mind and given altogether to God. This new friend half persuaded Alphonsus to follow his strong inclination for a life of solitude and penance, to give up his cherished idea of entering the Society, and to go with him to spend his days as a hermit. Rodriguez went, in fact, during the holiday time to see him at San Mateo, a large village many miles off, which he had chosen for his place of retirement.

The conscience of Alphonsus, however, reproached him with his abandonment of God's call, and he returned hurriedly to Valencia and sought out Father Santander. His director showed him clearly the value of obedience and community life, and the peril he had run in following his own fancy. Rodriguez threw himself on his knees, exclaiming: "Never again will I do my own will for the rest of my life. I put myself in your Reverence's hands, to do what you like with me; you may settle whatever you please." St. Alphonsus, by the Father's advice, begged our Lady to make his way clear, and then, full of conviction that his vocation was from God, sought and obtained from the Father Provincial, Anthony

Cordeses, admission into the Society. The official consultors had three several times, almost to a man, just as the Fathers of Segovia and on the same grounds, opposed his reception, but the Provincial overruled their objection, and insisted that the Society must not shut its doors to a saint. He was, however, to enter as a lay-brother.

This was the free choice of Brother Alphonsus, whom God had called to be, with St. Felix of Cantalice and so many other saints, a patron and a model to those called to a like high and humble calling. A few more years of application to study would certainly have enabled him to receive the priesthood, and Father Cordeses evidently could promise that he would then have been received into the Society of Jesus as a priest. But guided by his humility and the desire promptly to follow, and at once, his vocation, he of his own accord accepted the station of a lay-brother—a life of humble hard work, which renounces the dignities and responsibilities of the priesthood, and all that seems great in the eyes of men, to follow our Lord closely in the hidden humility of the eighteen years. St. Alphonsus knew well the grandeur of labour, which the Carpenter of Nazareth has ennobled, which obedience exalts to the very highest of deeds, because it makes it the fulfilment of the mighty will of God, and which prayer transfigures into a likeness of the life of those blessed spirits, who, no matter what their errand on earth, stand ever and for ever before the Throne. As in the old law, the children of Israel who were detained in the rear to guard the baggage, shared by Divine law with the warriors of the van the spoils of the victory; so in the army of the Lord, under the banner of the Holy Name, those who work in order to leave others free to preach and to teach, share equally with them in the everlasting rewards.

Accordingly when night had closed in, our Saint went to the College. Late on in the evening, some one knocked at the shutters of Alphonsus' room. He half opened them and there, with a face distorted with rage,

stood the hermit of San Mateo, who poured out upon him a volley of reproaches. Our saint put the shutter to at once. He never again heard of his quondam friend, and the question naturally arises, Was not the whole but a stratagem of the devil? So thought St. Alphonsus, and he spent the whole of that night, the eve of his reception, in prayer.

II. Life in Religion.

1571. It was on January 31, a day to be remembered by him during his forty years of religious life, that St. Alphonsus was received as a novice in the Jesuit College of St. Paul. There he went through the first part of his two years' probation. He threw himself heart and soul into his new life, carrying out most faithfully his resolution to make a total sacrifice of his own will, and giving to work all the time not devoted to obligatory prayer and rest. He passed through the month's retreat, which forms such an important part of a Jesuit's training, and he came out of it so full of fervour that after only six months of his novitiate, in July or August of 1571, he was sent to the new college at Palma, the capital of the lovely island of Majorca. The house had only been opened some ten years before, and it had but a very small chapel, once a Jewish synagogue, attached to it, dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Sion, to which was added a school, but this fell into disuse when the University of Palma was founded in 1483. A new and large church had been begun the very year of our Saint's arrival. Plenty of hard work was found for Alphonsus as a novice in helping the workmen at the building. His first fixed duties were those of undersacristan and companion to the Fathers on their errands of charity. The Jesuit College was when he arrived a mere makeshift of many houses thrown into one, but it was by degrees enlarged, and at the same time the course of studies gradually grew from the first elements of grammar till it included the highest studies of philosophy and

theology. It was not till April 5, 1573, two months beyond the usual duration of a Jesuit noviceship, that St. Alphonsus was permitted to take his vows. Probably his superiors still hesitated to receive him, as he did not seem to have the health or strength needed for his arduous duties.

One of the very first objects that catches the traveller's eye, as he enters the Bay of Palma, is the circular castle of Belver, while, on the side of the hill which it crowns is a white stone chapel, built in recent years. A pious lady was the castellan of this royal fortress in the time of St. Alphonsus, and shortly after his vows the Rector of the college, her confessor, took our holy Brother as his companion, when going to give to her the sacraments, as she was too old to come to church. The road was very steep, and though it was in February, the sun shone fiercely. With difficulty Rodriguez climbed the height, and the perspiration poured from his face. But he forgot his pains and fatigues in the contemplation of the mysteries of the Rosary. Just at the very hardest part of the road, our Lady appeared to him and gently wiped his brow with a cloth which she held in her blessed hands. Her tender charity filled Alphonsus with confusion, but so great was the joy that overflowed his heart, that he climbed the rest of the path with ease. The white chapel recalls this incident of his life.

In 1585, Alphonsus being then fifty-four, bound himself to God by his last vows, and these vows were so dear to him, that he used to repeat them every day during Holy Mass at the Elevation. Another holy Brother, the cook of the house, Brother Diego Ruiz, took his vows at the same time, the bosom friend and faithful imitator of our Saint. Diego never once asked for a day's holiday all the thirty years that he worked in the kitchen. He managed to hear every Mass said in the college church, spite of his morning's work, for the tribune was so near the kitchen, that he could slip down as soon as the priest's Communion was over and get ready the simple breakfast for him, so as to return in

time for the next Mass. St. Alphonsus assisted at his happy death in 1601, and began at once saying his beads, as ordered by rule, for the soul of his departed Brother, till our Lady showed to him Brother Diego safe by her side in Heaven.

St. Alphonsus had a like consolation as he knelt by the bed-side of Father Coch, the Rector, who had received him on his first coming to the island, and who died in July, 1587, in his third term of office. For at least six or seven minutes he saw the heavens open, and an array of blessed spirits waiting to escort his venerated Superior to his well earned reward.

After his vows, Rodriguez was made hall porter, a post demanding constant attention, considerable fatigue, and a large stock of patience; and this post he held till old age positively obliged him to have a helper, when he gradually gave up his employment for lighter work. At the college gate he was thrown across numbers of people of every class of life. Clergy coming to confession or to see the Fathers; boys and young men, lay and clerical, attending the college lectures; the poor who sought for alms; gentlemen and their wives, and Majorca teemed with Spanish hidalgos both proud and rich; and townsfolk of all degrees. All of these came within the influence of the lay-brother's holiness, and his whole life was a real apostolate for souls. Even learned theologians and religious looked to him for counsel, and later on in life he formed to sanctity, among many others, the Apostle of the Negroes, St. Peter Claver,* and Father Jerome de Moranta, who was to give his life for Christ in Mexico. Numbers were drawn by the words and example of the holy porter to embrace religious life, so that there was hardly a vocation on the island of his time that was not owing in some way or other to his saintly influence.

St. Peter Claver owed to the exhortations and prayers of his friend not only much of his spiritual knowledge

* See his Life, issued in the C.T.S. series.

and marvellous holiness, but his vocation to the foreign missions, which made him what he became, the Xavier of South America. To St. Alphonsus he went, with the leave of his Superiors, as to a director of his conscience, and the humble old man dared not refuse a trust which God had by an interior voice charged him to accept. The privilege of meeting the sainted porter of Majorca caused the young religious to regard the order to go to the College of Majorca as a special grace; and during the three years he spent on the island in the study of philosophy, St. Peter went quickly forward, under so sure a guide, up the steep road of sanctity. To Rodriguez was shown in his prayer the glorious throne prepared for his pupil in the courts of Heaven, side by side with St. Francis Xavier; and to him were revealed the great things which his apt scholar was to do in the Indies.

When Claver left Majorca for Spain, he carried away as a precious treasure, and he kept during his long travels, a little MS. work on spiritual matters written by St. Alphonsus' own hand, the only keep-sake which his rule allowed. In his last sickness one of his great consolations was to receive the small Spanish Life of his dear friend, the first ever printed, of which—the work is very rare—a copy is to be found in our British Museum.

By order of his superiors, St. Alphonsus composed, towards the close of his life, a too short memoir of the favours bestowed on him by God, and from that time, twice a year, he continued to give an account of his conscience in writing. Besides this he wrote several treatises on spiritual matters, which form three goodly volumes, full of great light in heavenly things.*

The witnesses to his canonization, who knew him in his post as porter and who testified to his holiness, are most numerous.

Whenever he was not called away by duty, he spent his time in praying fervently before a full length picture

* Our Saint is not to be confounded with his well known namesake, Father Alphonsus Rodriguez, the author of *Christian Perfection.*

of our Lord tied to the pillar, at the main entrance in the porter's lodge; nor was he distracted by the troops of college boys who came in and out. Or he would retire into his little inner room, and there kneel, often with out-stretched arms, at the foot of a great wooden cross which stood there: or, again, his favourite spot was a little window or squint which looked out on the Blessed Sacrament, where formerly a door had led into the church. There, gazing on the Tabernacle, he loved to spend his leisure moments in half-ecstatic prayer. Oftentimes he was found with his eyes filled with tears, and a light streaming from his face. Another picture of our Blessed Lord, which was said to have spoken to him, is still kept, with that of Christ at the pillar, as a precious relic.

His life was, in fact, a constant circle of prayer and work, or rather one unbroken round of prayer and penance. He rose by permission, until too old to do so, two hours before the rest of the community, and he always thought it was his Angel Guardian who took care to awake him. At once he roused himself from sleep, and prayers of thanksgiving and love, resolutions of giving the day to God's service started to his heart and to his lips, and with the sign of the Cross he began the *Te Deum*. He recited the words, "Grant us, O Lord, to keep us without sin," as if that day was to be his last. Then he said the Litany of our Lady.

Then followed his meditation, in which his soul at once flew up to God, as an arrow to its mark. When very old and ill, his superiors more than once bade him to give up the application of his mind to heavenly things for fear of tiring his head, but prayer was so natural to him that his effort to obey and refrain from it cost him more pain than relief. In fact, he grew more and more closely united to God, till even sleep ceased to separate him from his Beloved. Nor did this union ever hinder him from doing his work, or from attending to acts of charity. Even when lost to outside things in his constant raptures, obedience always at once brought him to him-

self. When the door bell rang, it was to him the voice of God. "Here I am, Lord," was his quick reply, as he hurried to the gate; and he welcomed as God whoever came, however importunate, or rude, or inconsiderate they might be.

Some of the witnesses at the process or official examinations about his virtues, with a view to his canonization, held after his death, acknowledged that when they were boys and attending the college, they used, as lads will do, to amuse themselves by runaway rings, and that when out of sight they would watch the holy porter as he came to answer the door. They must have been ashamed of themselves, for they never saw a sign of annoyance in his face nor in his manner when he looked out of the gate.

Whenever he had to leave the house, Alphonsus had learnt from his Rector, Father Coch, always to make a visit first to the College church, where he begged his Sacramental Lord that he might die then and there rather than offend Him while outside. As he walked the streets of the gay and brilliant city, neither there nor elsewhere did he ever look a woman deliberately in the face.

It was in those days the custom at Majorca for the server to give some water to those who had just communicated, and as St. Alphonsus constantly served at the altar, he had to do this continually to those of the devout sex; but so strictly did he keep his bargain with his eyes that the ladies used to call him the "dead brother." Not content with closely examining his conscience twice a day, he never let an hour pass without calling it to an account. When he went to his meals, his mind was so filled with thoughts of God and His Blessed Mother, that he seemed to have lost any taste for food, and had often to be bidden by his superiors to eat. One day a dish was sent in by mistake, made of some kind of gourd utterly unfit for the table, and as nauseous as it was unwholesome, but love of penance made him attack his portion with a greediness quite unusual to him. The Father Minister, the second in command, had no sooner

tasted it than he whispered to the Rector, "Death is in the pot!"* and the Superior, seeing how fast St. Alphonsus was devouring the nasty dish, sent some one down to him at once to stop him. So, too, when some boiled eggs were brought him which had served as nest eggs, he took them without a word, though the smell from them sickened those at his side. So little usually did he eat, so carefully did he abstain from any dainty or delicacy, that his meals were like a perpetual fast.

At recreation, as at all other times, when charity compelled him to speak, he was never heard to utter an idle word, and if the conversation turned on subjects of a useless kind, he retired into himself and became so absorbed in God as to seem to fall asleep, but he woke up at once when his Brothers began to talk of his favourite subjects, of God or holy things.

In addition to his other duties, Alphonsus had the care of the novice lay-Brothers, and he daily read to them some spiritual reading for half an hour. His devotion when serving Mass was contagious, and he was eagerly sought for by the Fathers, as they always experienced special favours when he was by their side, and people used to flock to hear Mass which he chanced to be serving. Several times a bright light shone out from his face as he knelt at the altar, as a token of the invisible graces which were his at that sacred time.

Out of the love of Jesus love of His Blessed Mother grew naturally and necessarily. This had been noted in him when even a child, and it only developed with a wondrous power when he was enrolled in the Society of her Son. In all his needs he turned to her with a certainty, which never deceived him, to gain whatever he wanted for himself or for others. Besides his Rosary, his favourite devotion was the well known Little Office of the Immaculate Conception, of which he may almost be called the author. Copies of this Office were then

* iv. Kings. iv. 40

very rare, and at the distinct wish of our Lady he loved to write it out, to get others to do so, and to give them away to all whom he thought able to recite it daily, a practice which he most strongly recommended. Our Blessed Lady approved so highly of his zeal and of this beautiful devotion, that the circular letter which announced his death made note of this, and the Office was at once printed in different cities of Europe. The favour bestowed on our Saint on Assumption Day at Segovia was only one of many like graces given to him on a feast doubly dear to a child of the Society, as at once the true birthday of its Queen, and of the Order itself, which had its beginning on that day in the crypt of Montmartre at Paris. Mary's Immaculate Conception was honoured in a special way by the good people of Majorca. Their great hero, the genius Raymund Lully, had years before defended it in a learned work; and a Bishop of our Saint's time had instituted most solemn festivities in its honour. When in a theological discussion its truth had been called in question, Alphonsus, always so meek and so reserved, seemed almost to lose all control of himself, as with a holy anger he argued in its favour. He declared very solemnly that one of the reasons why the Society had been called into being was to defend this mystery. He was never tired of commending to others a confidence in her, whose love and power had never failed him. One of his favourite aspirations was, "Jesus and Mary, objects of my tenderest love, may I suffer and may I die for love of you!"

1604. When past seventy, Alphonsus was so feeble that his superiors relieved him from his regular duties as porter. But he continued working at any work that he was able to do, as helping the porter on busy days, or sweeping the house, or working in the kitchen, till the very last years of his life. He clung, as to a privilege, to his turn to clean the plates and dishes after meals. And even when unable to kneel, he obtained, as a great favour, leave to serve Mass standing, in a private chapel.

When his future biographer and his faithful disciple, Father Colin, was leaving Majorca to complete his divinity studies in Spain, he went to say good-bye to our Saint. It was a Saturday evening in 1616, and he found his old friend confined to his room and seated on his bed, but so absorbed in God that he was able to throw himself at his feet and reverently to kiss them without being observed by him. As his last advice before they parted for ever in this life, Brother Alphonsus said to the young religious, that if ever he wished to obtain anything from God, he should ask it confidently from our Lady. "Be very devout to her, and be sure all will go well with you."

Such was the power of our Saint's prayers that at every emergency his religious brethren and people in the city had recourse to him. But when obedience added its authority to the dictates of charity, and he put forth all his strength, Heaven seemed to be unable to refuse his petitions. Wonderful were the cures wrought, extraordinary the conversions brought about, strange the change in hearts. The very elements seemed to obey him. One 8th of December, a terrible tornado swept over the city and the neighbourhood; hardly had St. Alphonsus at the bidding of his Superior said three Hail Marys, before all was calm and bright as before.

The poor man of Assisi, the seraphic St. Francis, had always a special place in our Saint's affection. His simplicity, his early life spent in business, his refusal out of humility of the priestly office, found a loving likeness in Alphonsus. To his father, St. Ignatius, he was naturally bound by the strongest ties, and when on one octave day of his feast the Rector bade him tell the praises of their great founder from the reading desk in the refectory, he amazed the community by his enthusiastic eloquence and by the deep insight he betrayed into the Saint's virtues. But there was no narrowness in his heart, and the founders of the various religious orders, St. Bruno, St. Dominic, all had a share in his affectionate reverence. Besides this, he had placed each hour of the

twenty-four under a special patron. St. Joseph, his Guardian Angel, the Patrons of Spain, St. James and St. Isidore, were among the number.

The prayers of our humble Saint were more powerful than the preaching of the missionary Fathers. The prosperous town of Soller, rich with its gold-laden orange-trees and its land-locked bay of blue, had become a den of thieves and was torn with fierce faction fights. Twelve lives had already been lost in its streets and neighbourhood. Each house was a fortress, and the townsfolk mounted guard with arms in their hands. Two Fathers of the Society, at the request of the Viceroy, were sent to give a mission, as the only hope of gaining peace to the blood-stained town. Not more than three or four sermons had been preached when a woman, whose husband, son, and father-in-law had been murdered in the frays, came forward, and, by a public deed, forgave the assassins. All flocked to the sacraments, and the Fathers were chosen by each party as arbiters and final judges. No one doubted that these wonderful results were owing to the prayers of our Saint, to whom in fact our Lady had appeared and promised that all would turn out well, and Alphonsus told this to the Rector before the good news reached Palma.

Lay-Brother though he was, his superiors used, as has been said, to make him give an exhortation in the refectory on some of the great feasts, under colour of an exercise of obedience and humility, and though he had little time for preparation, but a quarter of an hour or so, he filled all hearts with the love of the virtue on which he preached. "That is all very fine," said a Provincial who happened once to be present; "practise what you preach. Come down and kiss the feet of the community." This act of self-abasement and obedience was a great pleasure to our Saint. From the very outset of his conversion the foundations of humility had been sunk so deep that no exaltation however great could shake the profound and unchangeable conviction he had of his utter nothingness. He had received in reward for his

efforts of self-abasement so clear an insight into the misery of his own nature, that no reverence from his Superiors, no respect from the great ones of the world, none of the constant celestial favours he was receiving—so that his life seemed rather that of a dweller in Heaven than of one of that on earth,—nothing of all this could ever expose him to the slightest movement of self-complacency. Whilst he regarded his religious brethren as angels in the flesh, he fancied that the stench of his own baseness rose from his soul and tainted the very air in which he lived. And all through his life each revelation, each apparition of God and His Blessed Mother filled him with fear, lest, being so unworthy of such privileges, the whole might be, like his adventure with the hermit of San Mateo, but a delusion of the enemy.

Obedience, the virtue of a Jesuit, was necessarily the most conspicuous in St. Alphonsus. It was to give up his own will entirely and to follow that of God that he had entered religion; and so thoroughly had he realized the fact that the Superior's order was the clearest manifestation of God's will that he obeyed it with the simple heroism of Abraham, knowing that in perfect obedience was the highest perfection and the loftiest wisdom. Whatever he was told to do, he did at once and with the greatest pleasure. His clear vision of God in the person of his Superiors made him do things which to the world must appear folly, for he never reasoned, but was filled with one thought, that in hearing the voice, of no matter what Superior, he heard the voice of God. Father Alvarez, his Rector, merely to test him, told him, when past seventy, to go to the Indies. It was then late in the day and dark. Alphonsus at once left the room just as he was, and went straight to the porter to ask him to unlock the gate. "Where are you going, Brother?" said the porter. "To India, for the Rector has sent me." But the porter, who had been warned before, refused to open the gate, because the Saint had not his "paper of obedience"—the passport of a religious, and he sent him back to the Rector. "Where were you thinking of going?"

someone asked Alphonsus, "when told to start for the Indies?" "I should have gone to the port, and if I had found a vessel, I should have embarked: if not I should have walked as far as I could into the sea and only have turned back when I could go no farther, and so have come home again."

So another time, when the students on an exhibition day were going to act a play in the college, the Rector, to prevent all the seats being filled by the first comers, gave strict orders to Alphonsus, who was then the porter, on no account to open the gate before the time. The Viceroy Lewis de Manriquez and his brother, the Bishop of Palma, with their attendants, came before the hour fixed, but St. Alphonsus would not on any account let them in, spite of the angry expostulations of the retinue of the illustrious guests, till the Rector came down and explained the lay-brother's conduct, much to the edification both of the Bishop and Don Lewis.

These were but the extraordinary actions of a life which was, by its entirely supernatural character, in perfect harmony with them; so faithful to every order, to every rule, that no one ever knew Rodriguez to swerve a hair's breadth from them; and his superiors were always quite at their ease when they had set him any thing to do, because they knew it would certainly be carried out.

Obedience sternly restrained Alphonsus in the war he waged with his body, but up to extreme old age, nay, to his very death, he treated it as ruthlessly as he could. Besides sharing in our Lord's Passion, God had made him acquainted with all the horrors of death. The memory of all this was a constant motive for penance. Till he was sixty, he never lay on a mattress, but took his short rest in a chair, or when he was allowed, sleeping on the bare boards, and at times on broken potsherds. He never leant on the back of his chair; he never went near a fire in the short but sharp winter, nor in the glorious spring or autumn would he pluck a flower or a fruit, when he passed the day with the community at their country-house of Our Lady of the Mount. During

the last two years of his life the barber's lad took a brutal pleasure in hacking the poor old Brother's face; but not only did he make no complaint, but he gave himself up by choice to the inflictions of the brutal boy. God, however, took the cause in hand. The wretch perished by an assassin's hand. The Bishop of Majorca Fray Simon Bauza O.P., came to preach on the Beatification of St. Ignatius of Loyola at the college, and the Rector ordered a bed to be made up for him to rest awhile. As the house was under-furnished, the mattress of the old and decrepid Brother was borrowed, and next morning it was found that he had slept with nothing but a sheet between himself and the boards which formed the bedstead. Far from being annoyed, St. Alphonsus tried to persuade the infirmarian not to rob him of the luxury of such a mortification, though he promptly yielded at the voice of obedience and took back his mattress. So too, on the occasion of the Forty Hours during carnival time, his only chair was carried off, as the church was full, and places were found for persons of position in the tribunes and corridors. Though the chairs were piled up in one of the tribunes when done with, and could easily have been obtained for the asking, yet for a whole year the poor old man—he was past seventy—went without anything on which to sit, or to put his clothes. Nor did he get his chair back till after the Forty Hours of the following year, when the others were taken and restored again to their proper places.

But the cross, the school of virtue, the perfect mirror of our Lord came to him under far more terrible forms. In the earliest days of his religious life, he was tormented with the fear of losing his vocation, owing to his fancied unfitness, till God gave him deep peace by a revelation of his future perseverance. Then the fear of hell and a clear vision of his sins, without a gleam of comfort, tortured his soul. He had asked for a thorough knowledge of himself; but the vision overwhelmed him. God, however, took pity on him and after a few days filled him with light and confidence. But far more awful was the

struggle that followed, when by God's permission, the demon of impurity, for the long space of seven years, by every stratagem and by the most foul and seductive attacks, laid siege to his soul. All help from on high seemed to be withdrawn, and though the agony to him was far more bitter than death, and though he would gladly have been burnt alive rather than be brought face to face with sights so repulsive, his faith and love in his Divine Spouse never wavered. The foul spirits had boasted to him that they would never cease until they had made him give in; but our Blessed Lord and His Blessed Mother at length appeared and freed him from their vile attacks.

The morning's meditation was the very breath of Alphonsus' day, and as an old writer of his life puts it, the devil determined to force Bethulia to yield by cutting off the supply of living waters. Up to this time his prayer had been most fervent. Now the moment our Saint used to kneel down to his prayer, however well he might have been before, his whole body was tortured by a mysterious malady, which left him at once when the time for meditation was over. Oftentimes he fell prostrate on the ground as though he was on the point of death, so acute was the torture. During the whole period of his temptations this went on, yet never did he relax in his diligence much less abandon his prayer.

At last both trials ended, and the old delights came back, as he communed with his God. Still his crucifixion was not over. As, doubled with age, he was slowly going up the stairs of the college, in a preternatural way he was thrust backwards, and flew through the air till he fell so heavily on the next landing that two students who had seen what had happened, rushed to ring the college bell and brought the community out of their rooms.

They all supposed that St. Alphonsus was dead, and were surprised to find nothing but two slight scars on his bald head. But he lay in acute tortures for some nights. He told his Rector that he could only compare these pains to being cut in pieces by razors. All on a

sudden his pains ceased, and all trace of his wounds, which had till then remained, disappeared. This was only the prelude to the last and most terrible attack, for which our dear Lord had prepared him by an interior voice. Our Saint was then abandoned, like Job, to the rage of the devil, and like St. Colette, St. Hedwige, and St. Guthlac, the hermit of Croyland, he endured at the hands of the devil all the pangs of the most cruel martyrdoms. He Who sent him these trials could not but now and again console His suffering and patient victim. One night as St. Alphonsus offered himself up a willing holocaust, our Blessed Lord and His Holy Mother appeared to him in such a flood of light as to eclipse the lamp which was burning on the table, and they deigned to stay in sweet converse with the holy lay-brother. The Father in the next room, surprised to hear the strict silence of religious rule broken by voices at that hour, got up and opened St. Alphonsus' door, and the vision vanished. But our Saint, drunk with the wine of heavenly joy, seemed transfigured, and all remarked the power of his words on the following day, like those of one come down from Heaven.

1615. In his last years, constant and severe illness kept the old man to his bed, but even then he used to send the infirmarian to beg his Superior to allow him to fast, and to use his customary austerities; and when able, he loved to be carried to the tribune to hear sermons in the church or to pour out his soul before the Blessed Sacrament. The devils again attacked him with physical tortures of the most awful kind, and with thoughts of distrust in God, but he found strength and comfort in a picture of our Lady he ever kept close to him, the only treasure to which he clung, and it was but an old and poor print.

III. His End in Peace.

1617. His Rector, Father Julian, was down with rheumatic fever in the last May of the Brother's life, and as

the infirmarian was carrying Alphonsus to Mass, his Superior bade them bring him into his room and begged him to ask our Immaculate Mother to restore him to health. He spent the whole night in prayer and the Rector was quite well and able to say his Mass on the following morning.

St. Alphonsus was confined to his bed for almost a twelvemonth, and from August had been in such exquisite pain that he had to lie perfectly still on one side. But he refused any alleviation or delicacy, saying, "Believe me, these sweets are bitter and my sufferings are very sweet." Nor did he cease any of his devotions, even lamenting with tears that he could no longer practise his much prized penances. Once for a brief space his memory was so completely lost that he could not even get through an Our Father, and he was entirely dependent on the charity of any who suggested prayers to him.

Three times a week he went to confession, and, as he had been accustomed to do for many years, received his Lord with the greatest reverence, getting the infirmarian to prop him up in the bed. With his own feeble hand he took off his night-cap, as his Creator entered his cell. He loved to be left alone after Communion to make a very long thanksgiving. God evidently revealed to him the date of his death, but with his usual modesty he endeavoured to conceal this knowledge. He, however, unwittingly betrayed his secret. The Minister of the house, Father Michael Redó, who had to make his annual retreat just at that time, was anxious not to go to the usual place of retirement—Our Lady of the Mount —a mile and a half outside the city, and obtained leave to make it at home so as to be present in case of Alphonsus' death. When the sainted Brother was told this, he expressed his gratitude, because Father Redó could pray for him and be with him when he died. Thus it became known that within the eight days he would go to God.

On the 29th of October, after St. Alphonsus had received Holy Communion, all his pain ceased in an instant and he looked better in health than ever he had

done. His face, hitherto always pale, was now lit up with colour, and looked beautiful, nay transfigured. He passed three days almost without opening his eyes, and without a single sign of recognition, except when the Brother Infirmarian put a little broth to his lips, when he opened his mouth and swallowed it without difficulty. His pulse was strong and regular. To all who saw him it was evident that he was in an ecstasy. Now and again there broke from his lips, "My most sweet Jesus, my best of Mothers!" After midnight, on the eve of All Saints, he suddenly awakened to consciousness, and all his tortures came back. His pulse began to fail and the community hastened to the bedside. In a voice that wrung the hearts of all, he repeated over and over again the Holy Name. Then at half-past twelve, when the prayers for the agonizing had ended, he looked around—a thing so unusual for him—with eyes widely opened, bright with the light of another world, and full of joy upon all those present, and bending over to kiss the crucifix to which he clung, he uttered a protracted "Jesus!" and went to keep the feast of All Saints in Heaven.

The body, which assumed a beauty which it had never possessed in life, was placed in a coffin and laid out in his room on the first floor. The thumb and forefinger of his right hand were found to have grown callous with the constant counting of his beads. The cell is now turned into a chapel, and contains a number of relics of the Saint. The news spread quickly that Alphonsus had passed away and the college was crowded with all that was most distinguished in the island. But as the house was closed to the devout sex, they begged so hard to be allowed to gaze on one who had always been considered as a Saint, that about one in the afternoon the body of St. Alphonsus was taken to the church and placed on a very lofty catafalque, and guarded by some Jesuit and Dominican Fathers from the pious larcenies of the immense crowd. Every one wished to have a rosary, or handkerchief, which had touched his

remains, and the Fathers had difficulty to content the the surging mass of people which thronged around. The clergy secular and regular of the city came uninvited to chant the dirge. When it was over, one of the Fathers got up into the pulpit and said a few words to try and persuade the crowd to allow the body to be buried, and to vacate the church, so as to make it ready for the feast of the morrow. But all in vain. It was only after nine at night that the Fathers were able, and that with great difficulty, to carry the remains back into the house. At last, however, when the body was removed, the church was cleared and locked up, and to avoid any further demonstrations of respect, our Saint was committed in perfect privacy to his grave beside the altar of the Assumption, shortly after midnight.

In spite of the unwillingness of the Fathers to allow what in their eyes was contrary to the simplicity of religious, the authorities ecclesiastical and civil of Palma insisted on a magnificent funeral taking place on the day after All Souls'; and in presence of a dense crowd, Father Torrens, the intimate friend and director of Alphonsus, in a discourse of an hour and a half, lifted in part the veil which had hitherto concealed the hidden holiness of St. Alphonsus, and astonished even those who had thought that they had known him intimately, with the marvels of his sanctity and the wonderful favours which Heaven had bestowed on the lowly Brother.

But God spoke still more authoritatively by the numberless signs and miracles wrought by the relics and through the intercession of our Saint. During his life-time, spite of all his efforts to conceal his miraculous powers, his gift of prophecy and of healing diseases of soul and body, had been known far and wide. Immediately after his death, in every part of the Catholic world, his name was glorified by startling prodigies; and the chapel where his body reposed was soon covered with *ex votos* and inscriptions recording the favours obtained by his prayers. The Bishop, who had known him in life, allowed the

Saint's portrait to be exposed for veneration over his tomb; but the Decrees of Urban VIII., forbidding all signs of honour to any one who had not been formally beatified, caused the picture to be removed. But petition was at once made for the cause of his Beatification, and in 1632 our Saint was solemnly chosen as one of the Patrons of Majorca. It was not, however, till 1760 that the cause was so far advanced as to win for Alphonsus the title of Venerable. Only seven years later, the cruel decree of Charles III. of Spain, tore the Jesuit Fathers from each of their houses throughout the Spanish dominions and on one and the same night banished them pitilessly from the kingdom and its colonies.

The Bishop of Palma of the time took measures at once to protect the body and the other relics of the Saint, and the Society on its restoration returned once more to the College and Church of Monte Sion in 1816, to find them in perfect safety, and fresh offorts were made to procure the Beatification.

But Spain was convulsed with civil wars, and only in September 1824 did the glad news reach Majorca that Leo XII., on the 31st of July, the feast of St. Ignatius, had in the house of the Gesù at Rome, placed Alphonsus on the lists of the Beatified. The Society had then but a short time before recovered possession of the Church and College after its third expulsion, and splendid festivities commemorated the event. The rarest marbles and jasper were used in the construction of the Saint's shrine. It is in the severe classical style of the period, and consists of the tomb, containing the relics of the Saint, over which is a sort of dome supported on pillars, while a statue of St. Alphonsus in glory rises over all. Through the crystal in front of the shrine you may see a waxen image of the Saint, containing his bones, clad in black velvet, with a precious crown on his head. The Church is no longer in the hands of the Society; but now, however, the Jesuit Fathers are given full liberty to minister therein.

And the people of Majorca, strong though they are in insular prejudice against all that is foreign, have long ago adopted the stranger from Segovia as the son, so Spaniards put it, of their fair capital of Palma.

English guide-books and stories of travel do not speak of the hallowed sanctuary of Montesion—the old College and Church where our Saint lived, and where now repose his remains. But to the Majorcan, it shares in his heart the place of loving honour with the Convent Church of St. Mary Magdalen, the shrine of his country-woman, the virgin Saint, B. Catharine Tomas.

To our great Pontiff Leo XIII. was reserved the privilege of solemnly canonizing the humble Brother. On Sunday, the 15th of January, 1888, St. Alphonsus, and his spiritual child St. Peter Claver, were, with St. John Berchmans, and the Seven Sainted Founders of the Order of Servites, joined in one common honour.

For a detailed account of the memories of St. Alphonsus in Spain, see *Footsteps of St. Alphonsus*, "Month," Nov. and Dec., 1888. His life is shortly to appear in the Quarterly Series. Burns and Oates.

St. John Berchmans.

Of the Society of Jesus:

(1599—1621.)

BY THE REV. FRANCIS GOLDIE,
OF THE SAME SOCIETY.

I. Early Days. (1599—1616.)

In a quiet town of Belgium, near the frontiers of Holland, during the last years of our Queen Elizabeth, there was living an honest master-shoemaker named John Charles Berchmans. The terrible war of the Low Countries was still raging, and Diest, the home of the shoemaker, had felt its effects. It was not a war of conquest, nor of invasion; but it was a civil and religious strife, fostered by foreign powers, by England and by France, and made doubly terrible by the cruelty of Spaniard and fanatic Reformer. But Elizabeth was growing old, and Henry IV. of France was now a Catholic, while Spain, exhausted with the long struggle, wished earnestly to bring it to an end. So peace, like the grey dawn after a stormy night, was coming up over the sacked towns and blood-stained plains of the battle-field of Europe.

So too, all over Christendom, there was a turning of that portentous tide which had risen and risen until it seemed as if it would have engulfed even the eternal Rock of Peter and the Church which is founded upon it. The holiness of the Church, one of the visible marks of

her divine origin, had been sadly obscured by the worldly lives of prelates and of princes. The corruption of the lives of men who should have been examples to their fellows had given some grounds to the wide-spread revolt against the Truth, by lending to it a decent pretext and a taking watchword—"Reform." Now the winter was nearly past, and as in a Canadian spring, so in every portion of God's garden, flowers of exquisite holiness were breaking forth, shewing that His Hand was still with His people and that His Spirit was still upon them. There were saintly bishops and saintly princes, saints among the lowly and in the cloisters; there were great awakeners of the religious spirit throughout Europe, and great missioners to carry that Faith to pagan lands which had been lost to so many Christian realms, and to win for the Church fresh continents and fresh conquests. There were prodigies of Christian charity raising up again the hospitals and the houses for orphan and outcast, and giants of mighty learning to reclaim for the truth the empire of men's minds.

But the Saint of whom I am going to speak to you was none of these, and yet one of the many glories of the Catholic reaction in the seventeenth century, and one too who had and has still a mighty work to do. Then, as now, and as ever will be, just as the harvest depends in great part upon the sowing, so on the training up of the young, as is known by friend and foe alike, depends the spiritual future of the world. If the grammar schools of the Tudors, which took the place of the monastic schools in England, and the prohibition by penal laws of Catholic teaching, robbed our country of its faith, they were the seminaries and the colleges of the teaching orders which played the chief part both in the revival of that faith throughout Catholic Europe, and in its extension through the vast extent of the Eastern and Western Indies. So too, as the choicest fruits of these new nurseries of faith and learning, God raised up St. Stanislaus, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and St. John Berchmans to be models for the

youth of later days, amidst the shipwreck of faith and the breaking up of morals.

1599. On the 13th of March, a child was born to John Charles Berchmans and to his pious wife, at the sign of "the Great and Little Moon," in a room which is now-a-days kept as a holy place. The parish church, which, like the churches of our land, had been sacked by Protestant hands, was the scene of his baptism, and to him was given the name of the great Precursor, which was that, too, of his father—John. His mother, who, like the mother of his glorious patron, was called Elizabeth, looked upon each of her children as a sacred trust from God, and forestalled the dawning of their reason by careful religious training. Her little boy, spite of his quick temper and precocious mind, grew up as gentle and as guileless as a lamb; and early shared his time between the school and the altar. The schoolmaster congratulated the father on a child of such promise and of such goodness. And so much did the good shoemaker prize the innocence of this precious treasure that, spite of hard times, and the long illness of his poor wife which was a source of great expense to him, he put John to board with the good old parish priest, a Premonstratensian Canon, Father Emmerick, who had a number of boys under his care in training for the priesthood. Many a well-to-do burgher of Diest would gladly have received little John into his house to be a companion and an example to his own children. But John Charles feared for his innocence in the luxury of a rich home, just as he was anxious to keep his four boys out of the streets, and away from the perils of his workshop and its apprentices; and so sent them all away to safe hands.

By a sort of holy instinct, our Saint loved to be alone,* and shrunk from other companions, spending his time in study or in prayer. Prayer easily became with him a passion, and love of his sacramental Lord so took possession of his

* "He went up into the mountain *alone* to pray."—St. Matth. xiv. 23.

soul that one day he begged his confessor to admit him to his first communion. There and then he had his general confession all ready, and on the very next Sunday he was admitted to receive from Father Emmerick's trembling hands his Lord and Love. The desire to be admitted to a higher privilege, to be a priest of the living and life-giving Victim, had already taken its place in his heart; and one reason why John was so glad to enter the old priest's house was because it was the first step to the realization of his hopes, and because he could wear as did his other companions the clerical dress. And living now so close to the Tabernacle, his love to the hidden Dweller therein only grew the stronger. To serve mass was his great delight.

Nor was that other love less conspicuous—the consequence of his love of Jesus—his affection for the Mother of his Lord, and his own heavenly mother: rather, it was the great characteristic of our Saint. Looking down over Diest, on a height which seems all the higher as it rises out of the Flemish flats, stands the sanctuary of our Lady of Montaigu—the "peaked hill," or, as the Flemings characteristically call it, "the hill of crutches,"—so many being hung up there, signs of marvellous cures. The star-spangled dome and stately tower at its side were not yet built, but for many years the miraculous image in the oak tree had attracted crowds of rich and poor, of soldiers and statesmen, archdukes and peasants. Even when quite little, John used often to go fasting along the three miles to pray before her statue. Nor was this love of Mary a mere devotion of the fancy: it called forth, as true love always does, the spirit of sacrifice. Every Saturday he put aside some portion of his homely meal in her honour. And it seems certain that when but a child, he vowed his virginity to our Lady. More than once in the religious dramas, so popular in those days and so profitable, the part of a hero of chastity was naturally given to our little Saint; and when, in the rôle of Daniel, he de-

nounced the guilty elders, he was seen to tremble with emotion and indignation. There was no priggishness, nor air of superiority about the boy, but he was always so simple, so equable in temper, so ready to oblige, so kind, that he was the favourite of all, though quite unconscious of their preference.

A cloud was gathering on the bright blue of his happy life, which threatened to shut him off, and for ever, from his one ambition. John's father was able no longer to pay for his boy at the canon's; and he insisted that it was absolutely necessary, with a sick wife and his children growing up, that John should give up his studies and take to some remunerative trade to help his family.

For a moment John was stunned with the news; but he threw himself on his knees before his father, and turning first to him, and then to his poor mother, implored to be allowed to follow God's call to the Church. He was quite willing, he said, to live on bread and water, and he promised to be no further charge to his parents if only he might continue his studies. Another good priest of Diest offered him a home and bed and board for the moment; and a few days after there came a neighbour from Mechlin to say that one of the officials of the cathedral of that city was on the look out for a servant boy, who, as was often the way in those days, would wait upon him and the boarders he had in his house, and go with them to school.

So at the age of fifteen our Saint went to the precentor of Mechlin, Canon Froymont, who very soon found out what a treasure he had got in John. He was so ready, so intelligent, so attentive to his work, so modest, so religious, and yet withal so gay that the other cathedral dignitaries never thought a dinner was what it ought to be, unless our Saint was there to serve it. He was mother and father to three little boys whom the canon left entirely to his charge. Two young men, pupils in the precentor's house, were afterwards to follow John to the Society of Jesus, and one of them declared that, having

been a Protestant, he owed his conversion to the bright example of virtue shown to him by the servant boy. Even Canon Froymont was delighted to make Berchmans his companion when out a-walking. With the boarders, St. John used at first to attend the classes at the archiepiscopal seminary. But when in 1615 the Fathers of the Society of Jesus opened a College in Mechlin in the old palace of Charles V., John with others of Froymont's pupils went to the new college. He was admitted at once to the highest class and distinguished himself by his brilliant success, but still more by his industry, his lovableness and his unusual piety. He very soon was numbered in the lists of the Sodality of our Lady, a confraternity which is always composed of the pick of the students of the Jesuit colleges. His love of our Lady made him as pleased at being a member, as his companions were proud to have such a model sodalist.

Meanwhile a new horizon was opening out before the mind of our holy student. He had long made up his mind to be a priest; but as time went on, while reading the letters of St. Jerome, so full of brilliant pictures of the follies and dangers of the world, he determined to escape from its snares for good and all, by becoming a religious. St. Aloysius had died at the Roman College in 1591, and his life was shortly after published in Belgium. St. John read it, and not without a struggle, of which his humility was probably the cause, he recognised a clear vocation to become a member of that Society of which Gonzaga was so bright a glory. But the idea was neither lightly received, nor hastily carried out. He carefully weighed it in the balance of the sanctuary by earnest prayer and by counsel with his spiritual guides. With some money which the canon had given to John, he bestowed alms on the poor, got some Masses said before the ancient and venerated statue of the "Seat of Wisdom" in the University Church of Louvain, and offered the rest to our Lady of Montaigu. The answer came with such clearness that

with his confessor's leave he bound himself by vow to follow the call, as had done St. Stanislaus, come what might to hinder him. Indeed he needed all his courage to carry out this purpose. In a beautiful letter to his parents he told them how "now for nearly three or four months our Lord has been most evidently knocking at the door of my heart. I at first kept it shut against Him. But when I saw that whether at my studies, or on my walks, or whatever I might be doing, I always had before me the need to settle my future state of life, after many a communion, and many a good work, I have come to the conclusion, yes, I am resolved, to serve our dear Lord, with His grace, in a religious life. It is in some way hard I admit for friends and relatives to give up their children. But what would they do if our dear Lord—long may He spare them—were to call them to Himself? Sometimes too I keep thinking in my heart, if I saw before me, on the one hand, father, mother, sister, etc.. and on the other God our Lord with His—and, as I trust, my own—Blessed Mother, and the first were saying to me:—'Dear child, stay with us, we beg you by the weariness and fatigues we have borne for you, etc.': and Jesus Christ on His side were to say to me, 'I have been born and scourged, and crowned with thorns, and last of all have died on a cross for you! See here My five Holy Wounds! Have I not endured all this for you? Do you not know that I have fed your soul with My Sacred Body, and slaked its thirst with My Precious Blood? And now will you prove so ungrateful to Me?' When I think of this, my dear parents, my heart sets me in such a flame that, were it possible, I would this very moment fly to religion, and my heart and my soul will never be at rest till they have found their beloved Master.

"But you will say: 'It is too soon as yet. Wait till you have taken your degrees.' I ask you, if a poor man were to come a begging at your door, and you really were willing to give him something, and he were to say,

I will come for it in a year or two ;'—he could not be sure you would give it to him then,—would you not think him a fool and a madman? Are we not all beggars in God's sight? He is pleased now, after much prayer, out of His goodness, to give me the best of alms, a vocation to religion and to the Society of Jesus, the hammer of all heresies, the vessel of virtue and perfection ; and shall I tread under foot this grace of my dear Lord, and contemn it? It is doubtful whether our Lord would allow it to last for two years more. And may be I should hear from Him: 'I know you not.' So now with my whole heart I offer myself to Jesus Christ to fight under His colours. I hope you will not be so unreasonable as to oppose Him; but as, as I have read in history, the Egyptians offered their children to the crocodile, which they looked on as a god, and, while it was eating them up, the parents made high festival—so too I hope you will rejoice, as they did, and praise God and thank Him that your son should be found worthy, not to be *given* to God, for he does not belong to you, but to be restored to Him. I commend myself to your good prayers that our dear Lord may grant to me perseverance to the end of my life, and to you with me, hereafter, eternal life.—JOHN BERCHMANS."

This is but one of the many beautiful letters preserved to us of our Saint, in which he "is not dead but speaking." To those who do not know the force of affection and the power it has to blind the judgment, such a letter addressed to such parents could surely have but one reply. But our Saint's father, like many another parent, would not hear of his son's entering religion. He went over to Mechlin, and, failing to move John, roundly rated John's confessor for having put the idea into the youth's head. He urged that after having spent so much money upon his education he could not sacrifice the support which he looked for at his hands. The confessor, who had encountered similar difficulties from his own father—a shoemaker like Berchmans—answered with such good

reasons that he seemed to have gained his point. But it was not so. John's mother had a relation in the Franciscan house in Mechlin, and his father asked him to consult those religious on the matter of his call. He obeyed, and though his mother had engaged the community to do all they could on her behalf, the clear replies John made to all their objections convinced them that the call was from God. His relation, however, was not so ready to give in, and persecuted John with his repeated attacks, coming again and again to the precentor's, till at last the young man took the friar firmly by the arm, and showed him quietly to the door.

His parents still hoped against hope, but, to a fresh appeal for delay, our Saint wrote a short and apostolic letter to say that in another fortnight he was resolved to enter the noviciate. His father would have wished him to come over to Diest to say good-bye, but good Canon Froymont was anxious to spare the boy further heart-rending, and so John wrote to invite his parents over to Mechlin. It was a painful parting. The cordwainer, as a last effort, told John he must not look to him for a groat to enable him to carry out his purpose. "See, father," was his answer, "if the very clothes I have on kept me back, I would strip them off, and follow Christ like the young man who cast away his linen cloth."

II. Religious Life in Belgium. (1616–1618.)

A part of the old Palace of Charles V., of which a small portion is still standing, served at once for the college and the novice house of the Society at Mechlin. Thither on a Saturday, on the feast of our Lady of Ransom, Sept. 24th, 1616, with two of his companions, one of whom was to enter with him, went John, unable to control his joy at the near realization of all his desires. "O brother," he said to the one who was a postulant like

himself, "may we live together for ever in the Society in heaven, as together we are entering for God's sake into His Society on earth!" There was a lay-brother busy working in the garden. "There," said John, "how can we make a better start than here at once, by the practice of charity and humility?" So they set to to help the brother until the Rector and some other fathers approached to welcome the new comers.

A hundred or so of many nations and various ages were within those holy walls, being trained to the high perfection demanded by the rules and constitutions, then so fresh from the pen of St. Ignatius of Loyola. And more like two hundred came and went during the two years our Saint passed in the school of holiness. But far ahead of them all shot our holy novice, so that, such was his diligence in God's service, in a short while he surpassed even those who had been there for twenty-four months in his exactness and in his fervour. They all looked upon him as an angel in the flesh. And though he began with the firm resolution of being a saint, and, as he said, "a great saint too;" though he carried out his resolution in real earnest, by stern and constant self-restraint, and all the mortification which his superior would permit, he was ever so bright and cheerful that he got the name of Brother Hilarius, or the holy Hilarius.

The secret of his rapid progress was his care in little things, or, as he put it, "not so much the doing great things, as doing well whatever one is told." Whether it was learning French, of which the young Fleming knew not a word when he arrived, or trimming the lamps—a work painful and dirty, ambitioned by him probably because St. Aloysius had sought for it, or preparing his meditation, all was done as work should be done for God, with all possible painstaking, in the best way, leaving nothing untried to secure success.

He was never known to violate any rule or approved custom of the house; so that a novice who afterwards be-

came one of the literary glories of Flanders declared that no study of his rules, no prayerful meditation upon them ever moved him so much to their practice as the faithfulness of St. John in their observance. His excellence was not negative. His past success at school, the proofs he gave in the noviciate of remarkable ability and of clear-headed judgment, all showed that his talents were far above the average. He had a very marked character. But so completely did he keep himself in hand, so firm and constant was his guard over himself, that in word, in action, in his outer man Berchmans appeared to be faultless. Neither his superiors nor the companions with whom he lived could find in him anything blameworthy. On one occasion he begged his novice-master to subject him to a humiliation, customary as part of the training of the noviciate, of being told his faults by his religious brethren. They were ordered to jot down anything they might have noticed. But when their notes were sent in not one of the hundred young men had found anything to say against St. John. He had not been in religion a year before he was given a post of no small responsibility, that of porter, a sort of adjutant to the novice-master, to whom was entrusted the duty of carrying out all the details of domestic duty and of seeing to the regularity and order of the noviceship. This very elevation only made his humility and charity more conspicuous. If for any breach of discipline he was told to enjoin a penance on the offender, he begged to be allowed to bear the punishment himself; nor did he ever report an offence without first seeking light from his Divine Master in the Tabernacle.

His devotion to his Lord in the Blessed Sacrament was a natural outcome of his ardent love of God, and this love was contagious. Again and again during the day, at any leisure moment, he was to be found kneeling absorbed and motionless in the presence of his Lord. Holy Communion was his greatest happiness, and he hungered after that food of angels. The love of Mary,

which had possessed his soul from earliest childhood, of her to whom he owed his vocation, grew swiftly in the blessed atmosphere of John's life of prayer and self-denial. Her name was ever on his lips, and never did he join his brethren in recreation but he spoke her praises. He got others to become the apostles of her honour. Then, as in after life, the high privilege of her Immaculate Conception attracted very specially his devotion. To his spiritual guides every secret of his soul was manifest, and it is recorded of one of them how deeply humiliated he felt in the presence of this revelation of youthful holiness; a holiness never satisfied with itself, but ever like the great St. Francis Xavier crying out, "More, O Lord! yet more!"

Spite of the extraordinary insight the Saint possessed into his own heart, spite of the magnifying glass with which his humility enlarged his seeming defects, his confessors imagined themselves in face of an angel rather than a creature subject to human frailties. Yet all the while so full was he of his own nothingness that he was forced to confess that he had really little to fear from the robber and bane of all merit—self-conceit and pride. After but one year of probation St. John had been admitted to the privilege of binding himself to God by private vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

1618. On the 25th of September, joyfully and with a great heart, he publicly took the vows of the Society of Jesus, and, as far as he could, offered himself for ever to his good Lord in the Society to which he had been called. He left the world, but the world or what are dearest in it had left him. His mother had gone to her reward shortly after he began his noviciate; and his father, who would have wished to have followed the example of his holy son, as did another of his children some eight years later, was prevented from so doing by the care of his family, and entered the ranks of the secular clergy, having been ordained a priest a few months before St. John finished his noviciate.

A new phase of life began for our Saint. His soul had been devoured by a desire to do and suffer for his Lord, and to take his part in the great struggle with evil under the banner of truth. His daily prayer was that he might be fitted for whatever work for God the Society should ask at his hands. And now the answer came that he was to go to Rome to prosecute his philosophical studies at the Gregorian University, the *Alma Mater* of the Society, or, as it is best known, the Roman College. St. John wrote to his father asking him to come over to meet him and to say good-bye, but he learnt from one of his school-fellows the sad news that his well-loved parent had died a week before—nor had any one broken to him the sad news. This made the sharp trial all the more hard to bear.

He commended his orphaned brothers and sisters warmly to their relations and to the good precentor, and then, like St. Ignatius and St. Stanislaus, went his way to the Holy City.

III. St. John Berchmans at Rome. (1618-1621.)

1618. Our Saint, then nineteen years of age, set out at the close of October on his long journey and on foot through France and Italy, with another young Belgian religious of his own age. The fatigues of the journey were forgotten in the delight of going to Rome, there to see the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and the General of the Society, and to pray at the tombs of the great Apostles and of St. Ignatius and St. Aloysius. There was too the hope that at the headquarters of his Order he would more easily obtain the long-desired order to go to China, or some other heathen and martyr-haunted mission. Wherever he passed, St. John left an undying memory of his wise and holy conversation. It was on Christmas Eve that the dome and towers of Loreto came up before the

pilgrims on a slope that must have recalled to him the loved sanctuary of Montaigu. What a joy to hear the midnight Mass in presence of that lowly roof which had sheltered Mary and the Incarnate Word! The good folk who crowded the spacious basilica gazed in wonder at the worn and transfigured face of the young Fleming, as amidst all the vast throng, he knelt out the long service motionless and rapt in prayer; and they thought him another Aloysius Gonzaga, or some prince in disguise come from afar to spend the Christmas within the Holy House.

The last night of the year, when all Rome throngs to join in the *Te Deum* in the stately church of the Gesù, the two wayfarers were welcomed with a fatherly embrace by Mercius Vitelleschi, the General of the Society of Jesus. Berchmans spent a day or two in the house attached to the Gesù, now some Government offices of the Italian kingdom, the home of many a saint. Some novices, who were there to wait at table, when they went home to their noviciate of St. Andrew on the Quirinal, assured their novice-master that the young Belgian just arrived was a portent of holiness.

On January 2nd, St. John took up his quarters in the vast Roman College in a room once occupied by St. Aloysius, who had died in the infirmary there nearly a quarter of a century before. But many there were who still remembered the angel of the Gonzagas, and the common feeling was that he had come back again amongst them in the person of Berchmans, and better than he in one external point, in his greater amiability of manner. Some there were who thought that this bloom of virtue must soon wear off, and that it was merely a novice's piety, more on the surface than deeply rooted. But those who came to know him more closely soon formed a different judgment. "Do not spoil my little Fleming," said the Father Minister—the second in command—to young Oliva, the future General of the

Order, "for he is, I assure you, good, good, very good; nor will his virtues," he added, "prove to be false." It is fortunate for us that Father Cepari, the confessor and biographer of St. Aloysius, was the Rector of the Roman College during the time of St. John. From him, no secret of the Saint's soul was hidden, and he knew him thoroughly within and without; and the biography which he has left us of Berchmans deserves the praise of the late Father Faber of being "perfect in its way."

Men of great eminence in learning and holiness were amongst the contemporaries of St. John in the College, both as teachers and learners; and amongst the members who thronged the schools were students of every nation, many of whom in after life were to hold high positions in Church or State, or to spend themselves in the missions at home and abroad. There were Ward, Ann, Vavasour, Constable, Pole, Harvey, and Huddleston, Walpole, Dormer, Neville, and Courtenay, Salvin, Rookwood, and other good names, among the English students who sat on the benches of the college while Berchmans was there, and who carried the memory of his holiness to our persecuted land. His light was not put under a bushel, but plain for all to see; and every one who came across him, or knew him however slightly, was struck by the radiance of heavenly modesty that beamed from his bright and engaging face, so placid yet so intelligent spite of its ever down-cast eyes.

Though so highly gifted, St. John spared no pains to succeed in his studies. With perfect order and method unflinchingly adhered to, with careful husbanding of every moment of time, he stirred himself up to work by the thought that men who study simply for honour's sake, do it with such a will, and "Shall I," he said, "be less jealous of God's glory than they are of their own?" He lost no chance of self-improvement, and learnt to speak Italian as he had learnt French with a correctness and elegance rarely found in a foreigner. He thought of

obtaining leave to spend some time in the English College, and then in the German College, to perfect himself in the languages of both before returning to Flanders, feeling the truth of the saying, that "the man who knows several languages is worth as many men as the number of tongues he has acquired." But these off-studies, these ambitious schemes for a future which never came, did not distract him from his great work; and so successful was he in his philosophy that, at the end of his course, he was selected to defend against all comers in public tourney the whole field of that vast subject. It was a sight to see that modest, bashful young man, with skilful parry and thrust, with the happiest memory, with keenest analysis, meet the many adversaries who took up arguments against him, and win applause from all by his brilliant defence of the thesis entrusted to him.

But higher far was Berchmans' ambition to be a saint than to be a scholar. No care, no painstaking, no foresight was too great to ensure this noblest end. His fidelity from childhood, the jealous watchfulness of his parents had enabled him in the secret of his heart to thank God for the greatest of His gifts, for having preserved unstained by grievous sin the white robe of baptism. But not content with so high a favour, he fenced round his treasure with a hedge of thorns. Spite of a delicate constitution, and of the wear of a climate not his own, and of studies pursued with such ardour, he refused every pleasure to his senses; and unable to do the penance he desired, he closed his eyes to the great religious pageants, to the splendid progresses and pomps of the centre of Catholic life and worship. He practised the most rigorous poverty, refusing to keep anything but what was strictly necessary. He bore the keen shafts of the short but piercing winter, and the oppressive heat of the Roman summer, never seeking any alleviation, any exception in clothing or food. His extraordinary and unchanging fidelity to every regulation, to every autho-

rized practice, his prompt and punctual obedience to every order of those over him were, as he said, his most severe penance—"My greatest penance is common life." And no example of others, no human respect, no natural weariness, ever betrayed him into the smallest breach of the many rules which surrounded him, or into the smallest violation of the wish of any superior. There was no pettiness nor scrupulosity, no straining at trifles and being careless about things of importance, but he saw that to him, called as he was by God to that particular form of life, each rule, each expression of the will of those to whom His Eternal Lord had delegated His authority was an expression of His all-holy Will, and therefore the one thing worth doing. "The more you love your rule, the more will you make progress," was one of his sayings. This was the motive of all his obedience, and his fixed law was "to find God ever in his superiors."

Of his love of poverty we have already spoken, and of his innocence. But upon that bridal dress he wrought "inæstimabiles margaritas," he broidered it over with priceless pearls. St. Ignatius of Loyola in a letter on obedience, which is one of the most perfect treatises on that most difficult and unworldly virtue, quotes St. Leo, who says, "Nothing is hard to the humble, nothing difficult to the meek;" and this is merely the teaching of the greater Master, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart." In the last year but one of Brother John's life he devoted all his powers to acquire the virtue of humility. "Contempt of self is a short cut to perfection, and it causes great peace of soul," is one of the echoes of the teachings of holy writers which he had made his own. He always, without affectation as without ceremony, chose when he could the last and lowest place. He took every opportunity to do humble and menial offices for others. He looked upon himself as admitted to his Order out of pure charity, and so took everything that was done to him in that spirit. When one Holy Week he had been sent out to help at the

services in the Jesuit Church in Frascati and the road was heavy and miry, he carried off his brothers' shoes and cleaned and brushed them for them. He was fond of serving the community at table, and he watched his chance, when any happened to come in late, to stay behind and to see to their wants. He was very fond, too, of spending the time of recreation with the lay-brothers, and, when his turn came round to distribute the broken meat to the poor at the door, it was to him a high holiday.

Cardinal Maurice, of the ducal House of Savoy, came in great state one day to the College, and was welcomed by a polyglot academy of set speech-making, in which twenty-seven religious of various nationalities each in their own tongue held forth on a theme suggested by the 8th chapter of the Book of Wisdom. John was chosen to speak in Flemish, and to him fell strangely enough, if it had not been especially selected for him, to develop the text: "And I shall be admired in the sight of the mighty." The moment his part was done, he made his way back to the sub-minister, and asked for some work in the kitchen, and when he was told there was none, he went off to pray in the church. Just as at Mechlin, he had the charge of the lamps for the various passages; no light task, but a labour of love because, as remarked, obtained by St. Aloysius.

Charity was the virtue St. John had chosen as the one especially to be aimed at the last year of his life. Always blind to the failings of others, he noted down the various points which pleased him in those around him. He had a life-long and special affection for any father who had ever in any way been his superior. But none even of the four brothers who in succession shared his room with him, could ever say too much of his thoughtful kindness, of his fear of any way inconveniencing them, his ingenuity of taking upon himself any work that was to be done—making the beds or sweeping or tidying the room. Though free from any tinge of affectation, and with

rather less than more of the Italian politeness, he showed constantly a genuine love of all his brethren, new or old, without any distinction—unless in favour of the sick, the suffering, or the lowly. He was specially fond of the society of the simple lay-brothers. He was ever at the beck and call of all. He had the care of the men-servants, not lay-brothers, who helped in the work of the house; and he was unsparing in his watchfulness over them and in bringing them regularly to the sacraments.

But all this beautiful life took its rise from that hidden source, known only to those, and even to them only in part, to whom Berchmans, as by rule obliged, unveiled the hiddenmost depths of his soul; a source known now even better to us by the notes written by him for his own use, which escaped destruction at his hands only by his sudden illness. As he knew well, prayer is the first condition of grace, of progress, of perseverance, and so while for God's glory he threw himself so thoroughly into his studies, he valued above all success in the schools, success in the art of prayer. St. Ignatius, a master in that difficult work, has left careful directions how to light the fire, how to guard it when lit, and how to fan it into flame; and these directions became part of the daily life of our Saint, so faithfully did he observe them and make them his own. His hour of prayer in the morning made its warmth felt in his frequent communions, in his daily Mass, in every action of the well filled day. You could not speak to him, but, naturally, the current of his thoughts showed itself in his words. God and the things of God were the favourite topics of his conversation; and even great theologians, and learned professors, and men of extraordinary holiness, the men of choice of the Society, then living in Rome, loved to share his company in order to profit by his conversation. As an arrow to its mark, so naturally and necessarily to the Blessed Sacrament was attracted all the love of John's inflamed heart. He loved to serve Mass; he loved to snatch a spare moment from his studies to go before the Tabernacle. Busy though he

was, he gave up the whole of his mornings after communion to purely spiritual work. Often so enchained was he, that, when the time of the visit to the Blessed Sacrament was over, his companions had to rouse him to the memory of things around him. Yet he never allowed his devotions to make him forget the smallest duty when taking part at the altar in any public ceremony, though his devotion and reverence were not the less. When the relics of St. Aloysius were being solemnly translated to a chapel of our Lady, in the old Church of the college, St. John assisted as acolyte. A venerable Father who had known Gonzaga said to his companion, "This youth seems another Aloysius." And we read of a gentleman so attracted by the ardent expression and fixed attention of Berchmans when at vespers at the Church of the Gesù, that he never failed to be present to feast his eyes on the sight of a living saint, and people in the street used to stop and gaze after him as he passed.

And as he grew in love for Jesus, so too grew his love for Mary. He thought the day was lost if he had not said something in her praise. He placed under her care his fragile health, his advance in holiness, and his progress in his studies. He vowed to defend her great prerogative of the Immaculate Conception, and signed the vow with his blood. He began to collect materials for a work, of which he had already formed the general plan, in defence of this privilege of our Lady. To him we owe the little Rosary of the Immaculate Conception, now approved and indulgenced by the Church.

IV. A Precious Death. (1621.)

1621. Returning home one day in July from a visit with the well-known historian, Father Strada, to his well-loved shrine of our Lady, Saint Mary Major's, St. John was listening to the story of the peaceful and happy deaths

of those who had died in the Father's time in the Roman College. "Pray God, Brother John," said the Father, "my soul may die the death of the just." "Father," Berchmans rejoined in a tone so unusual in one whose deference to others was so remarkable, "we ought to say, 'may my soul *live* the life of the just,' that thus we may be able afterwards to say, 'may my soul *die* the death of the just!'" There was a note struck by these words soon to be better understood. And yet it was but the expression of our Saint's daily habit of mind. "Love of God," he wrote down in his notes this year, "is only to live from day to day, from hour to hour."

The hard work of preparation for his public defension, through the unwholesome heat of a Roman summer, had tried his northern and delicate constitution. The truth was beginning to dawn more clearly upon him, when on St. Ignatius' feast, July 31st, he drew the ticket, as was the custom, of a patron saint for the coming month, and the motto on it was, "Take heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is." The whole truth at once flashed upon him, and he told the good news to more than one in the college. A few days after he was slightly unwell, but that did not prevent his going to take part by his superior's wish in a theological disputation at the Greek college, spite of the distance and the burning heat. That night the insidious Roman fever had seized him, and the following day he felt bound to tell his superior of his state, and he was sent off to bed in the infirmary. Now he hoped indeed that his time was come. And matters got rapidly worse, for the fever robbed him of his sleep, and, on St. Laurence's day, inflammation of the lungs set in, and his strength began rapidly to give way.

St. John talked to all that came to see him of death and of heaven as a general might speak of a war and certain victory. His only trouble was the inconvenience and expense to which he was putting the house, and as he told his superior, he feared besides were he to die, as his companion from Belgium had

already done, it might cause some unpleasantness with the fathers of his native land, who would not like to send any more students to Rome, and so would weaken the tie of charity between the various provinces of his Order. But otherwise, "My wish," he said, "is rather to go than to stay." That night he could not sleep, and our Saint turned to talk to the infirmarian who was watching by him, and when the brother told him he thought he ought to receive Viaticum, John, spite of his prostration, leapt up and flung his arms around his neck in a long, joyful embrace. The poor brother answered his delight with bitter sobs, but the dying youth did his very best to comfort him. And so the early morning passed, till at half-past four our Saint, dressed in his habit, and lying on the mattress on the floor, welcomed his Sacramental Lord. The moment the rector approached his side, John rose from his couch, and threw himself upon his knees. He would have fallen back, had not two of his brothers borne him up. Kneeling thus, he made, in Latin, a magnificent act of faith. "I declare that there is here really present the Son of God the Father Almighty, and of the most Blessed Mary, ever a virgin; I protest that I wish to live and die a true son of our holy Mother, the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, a true son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a son of the Society." Then he received Viaticum and Extreme Unction, and he was the only one in the room who was calm and unmoved.

All the rest were so overcome as to be unable to do else but weep, even the Father Rector could hardly pronounce the words of the ritual. When all was over, his superior asked him if he would like to say anything to console his brethren; and St. John whispered into his ear that his greatest consolation was that, never since he entered the Society, had he committed a deliberate venial sin, or wilfully broken a rule, or disobeyed the order of a superior. The very fact of his making such an avowal was taken by all as a certain proof of his foreknowledge

of speedy death. St. John begged as a last favour to be allowed to bid good bye to all, and for a long time he gave and received his last messages. To all he recommended great love of our Lady, great zeal for prayer, and fidelity to the rules of the Society.

The next day, Thursday, the twelfth of August, was spent by St. John in prayer, and in saying loving words of counsel and farewell. He said plainly he would die on the morrow, and when late in the evening the prayers were said for a departing soul, he begged them to insert in the Litany the Saints of the Society, and among them St. Alphonsus Rodriguez,* who had died scarcely four years back, and who now is joined with St. John in the glory of canonization.

Twice in the night terrible storms of temptation came over the soul of the dying youth, and then with rule-book, and crucifix, and his rosary twisted round them in his wasted hands, he lay waiting for death. The Litany of our Lady was being recited by one of the community, and St. John repeated each petition, even correcting the father when, as, he was gazing into Berchmans' face, he made some slight mistake. When the titles "Virgin of Virgins," "Mother most chaste," "Queen of Virgins" were pronounced, St. John showed most special signs of devotion, making a reverence to a picture of our Blessed Lady. Thus at eight o'clock on Friday, August 13th, 1621, with his eyes on his crucifix, and with the holy names of Jesus and Mary on his lips, he went to his reward.

His death was followed by an outburst of devotion in Rome that made his funeral a scene of turmoil, from the crowds that pressed around his holy remains, and sought to secure some relic of the Saint.

Miracles were wrought in Belgium, as in Rome, and crowned heads petitioned for his beatification. Pius IX., on May 3rd, 1865, published the decree. On the

* See his Life, issued in the same series as the present.

Morris,[1] which embodies in its new edition all the results of modern research, that the difficulty of getting anything but the dryest summary into a single sheet is not the least that meets the writer.

1118. St. Thomas was born in London on December 21, 1118, the feast-day of the Apostle whose name was given to him at his baptism on that same day. His father and mother were both of the conquering race of Normandy, and the former was a merchant in not very affluent circumstances. The very day the child was born, a fire, an every-day occurrence in old London, broke out in his father's house. But poverty did not change the kindness of their hearts, and his mother taught him early to love the poor, for she used to put him in the scales against an equal weight of food and clothing, which she then gave to the needy. The lad was soon sent to one of the great schools of London, and shared in their literary contests, and in their rough sports. Thomas early learned to love the excitement of hawking, to which a wealthy Norman baron, an old friend of his father, used to invite him. With his natural impetuosity he fell one day into a mill-race, while urging his horse across a narrow plank, and the boy was nearly swept under by the water-wheel. When older, Thomas was sent to school with the Canons Regular of Merton Abbey, near Wimbledon—the great religious houses were all schools in those days—and there he made a life-long friendship with the good Prior, who became his spiritual guide, and was a witness of his death. Meanwhile his father died. The young man went, when about twenty-one, to the famous University of Paris, but the death of his good mother forced him to abandon his studies, and for three years he held a clerkship, as we should say, in the City, until he took his first step to promotion by entering into the household of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, a fellow-townsman of our Saint's father.

[1] *Life and Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket.* Second and enlarged edition. By John Morris. Burns and Oates, 1885. The writer or rather compiler of this short life begs from the outset to acknowledge that he owes to Father Morris' Life, with the author's kind permission, not merely the substance of this sketch, but many passages literally transcribed from it.

1143. We read a description of Thomas just at this period in an old chronicler: "Slim of growth, and pale of hue, dark of hair, with a long nose and a straightly featured face, blithe of countenance was he, keen of thought, winning and lovable in all conversation, frank of speech in his discourse, but slightly stuttering in his talk; so keen of discernment and understanding that he would always make difficult questions plain after a wise manner." Spite of the jealousy of rivals, Thomas' commanding abilities soon carried him to the front, and we find him going to Rome with the Archbishop on important business with the Pope; and, again, he was sent alone, and by his tact and skill secured for Henry II. the right of succession, already assured to him by treaty, to the English throne. Benefice after benefice was bestowed on the young ecclesiastic. His diplomatic career showed him the weak points of his professional armour, and he sought the first school of Canon Law, Bologna; where, under the most learned canonist of his day, and afterwards in France at Auxerre, he became such an accomplished lawyer, so thoroughly conversant with the Church's rights, that he was able to carry on with a sure hand the warfare in after years. A cleric already, Becket was ordained deacon, when the magnificent livings of the Archdeaconry of Canterbury and the Provostship of Beverley made him one of the wealthiest churchmen in the land.

1155. On the coronation of Henry II., the young King remembered to whom he owed the sceptre, and raised the accomplished Archdeacon, then thirty-eight years old, into the next place to himself, by taking him as his Lord Chancellor and bosom friend. Not content with this, he gave him the charge of his eldest son. An English Chancellor was in those days the channel of royal favour both in Church and in State. To his hands came all the revenues of vacant bishoprics and abbacies. He was, in a word, prime minister, and much more, of a despotic sovereign, who was sixteen years his junior, and who left to him the actual control of the kingdom. The vast wealth to which he became entitled was spent with lavish magnificence, and the stately Tower of London owed its restoration to his hands. Commander-in-chief of the royal forces, with a number of knights

attached to him by feudal service, the sons of the nobility crowded to his court to learn the arts of peace and of war. His magnificence was displayed in his all but royal state, and in the open house which he kept. But Thomas never forgot the poor, and whether in the courts of justice, or in his crowded dining-hall, their rights, their wants were never unheeded. Like Wolsey in his embassy to France, Thomas Becket went to the Court of France with a train fit for the greatest of princes; and, when war broke out, he showed that he could handle an army, and fight like the first captain of his day. Yet amidst all this apparently worldly life there was an undercurrent of holiness that was little suspected. One who had come to beg a favour of the Lord Chancellor, passing by a church at early dawn, saw in the doorway a man prostrate in prayer. When he was ushered into the Chancellor's presence he recognized him at once as the watcher at the church door.

In fact, with all his outward pomp, we know St. Thomas practised severe bodily penance, and we have the witness of his confessor that, spite of the corruption all around him, he kept his soul unspotted. A court beauty, whose reputation was not of the best, was thought to pay too much attention to the Chancellor while staying with the King at Stafford. A suspicious friend pryed into Thomas' room at night, only to find that Thomas made the rough floor his resting-place.

It did not take the Chancellor long to see the difficulties which surrounded his new position, one as responsible as it was exalted. The King was of a temper uncontrolled and uncontrollable. His notions of the rights of conscience, and of Church property and discipline, were those of a ruler who brooked no opposition. Thomas soon found that all he could do was to wait till his paroxysms of passion had passed, and try, at all events, to diminish evils he was powerless to prevent. No wonder that to many it seemed as if he were responsible for the injustice of his sovereign, and that these ever-recurring struggles made him, with tears in his eyes, tell his closest friends how weary he was of life, and that, next to saving his soul, there was nothing he wished for more than to be free from the dangers of the Court. That he kept the balance so evenly in spite

of so many difficulties merited for him the high praise of a successor in the Chancellorship, the Protestant Lord Campbell, that he was "one of the most distinguished men of any race that this island has yet produced."

1161. But greater perils were in store for him. His old friend and patron, Archbishop Theobald, died, full of years, but fuller far of griefs, of which the tyrannical conduct of his sovereign was the chief cause. Thomas was with his royal master at Falaise, the Conqueror's birthplace, when Henry ordered him to return to England on business of great moment, informing him before he went that the chief reason for his journey was that he should succeed his friend in the see of Canterbury. Thomas laughed, and said—for he was as usual dressed like a gay courtier rather than an archdeacon—"A nice saint and a nice monk you wish to put over that holy see and famous monastery! I am sure if God were so to place me, your affection and goodwill to me would quickly be turned into the deepest hate. I know you would expect me to do, as you do now, many things with the Church which I could never tolerate, and then my rivals would make this the occasion of provoking an endless quarrel between us." But the King, stiff-willed in all things, would not give way, and, as his wish was well-nigh law, the monks of Christ Church were fain to choose Thomas, though he was not one of their order, and though some feared that Henry had named him as a ready tool with which to oppress the Church. It needed the authority of the Pope's Legate to make Thomas accept a dignity which he knew would be thorn-crowned. One condition, however, was made by the aged Bishop of Winchester, the brother of the late King, and it is worthy of note that the new Archbishop should be held completely free from all claims that might be made upon him on account of his chancellorship. To this the King gave full consent. At once the highest official of the crown and the primate of the land, St. Thomas was received with the greatest honours in his cathedral city. Unable to refuse the dignity, he with all his characteristic thoughtfulness resolved to fit himself for it. One who was to be his faithful companion in sunshine and in storm, Herbert de Bosham, was ordered

by his master to become his monitor, and not only to tell him at once whenever he had noticed any fault in him, but even if he heard others find fault with him. He said that "four eyes were better than two," and he does not seem to have been content with four, but to have bade others to do like service for him. In such dispositions Thomas was ordained priest on Saturday in Whitsun Week.

1162. The following day, Trinity Sunday, he was consecrated by his firm friend the Bishop of Winchester. When the ceremony was over, the aged prelate said to his young primate, "Dearest brother, I give you now the choice—you must lose the favour either of your earthly or of your heavenly King." Upon his knees and with uplifted hands St. Thomas made answer: "By God's help and strength I make my choice; and never for the love or favour of any earthly king will I forfeit the grace of the Kingdom of heaven." And, as the Bishop blessed him, both burst into tears: it was the offering of the future sacrifice. He said a second Mass, according to the custom of those days, immediately after, in the chapel of the Holy Trinity, situated at the extreme east end of the cathedral—his favourite spot during life, his resting-place after death.

On the arms of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury to this day one sees the pallium, never a mark of primacy, but the sign of union with the Catholic and Roman Church, the proof of Papal sanction, from which alone can come the power to rule and feed God's sheep; because He has constituted that Church the one source of all spiritual authority upon earth. St. Thomas hastened to send an embassy to the Pope to sue for this symbol, which was necessary for his rule, and when it was brought to him he went out barefoot to meet it, as a sign of reverence and devotion to the Holy See.

As Archbishop of Canterbury, he became by the very fact Abbot of Christ Church, and, though not a monk, he made himself like unto one by his life. It was a sudden change and a marked one from the life of courtly splendour which he had been leading now for many years. Midnight found him with the community in the choir of his cathedral joining in Matins. No sooner was it over than thirteen poor men were brought

up to a room, where, in imitation of his Divine Lord, the Archbishop washed the travel-worn feet and kissed them reverently. Then, having served them at a well-laden table, he dismissed them with an alms at daybreak; he did not wish to parade these beautiful acts of humility and charity. These were but few of many who were relieved regularly by his orders. Then St. Thomas gave a short time to sleep and rose betimes to study Holy Scripture, his favourite study, which he continued even when on a journey. Then came a long interval of private prayer, in which no interruption was allowed. This was the preparation for saying Holy Mass, or for hearing it, when out of reverence he abstained from celebrating. His soul was wrapt in God during the Holy Mysteries, and "he seemed," says one who knew him, "to see in the flesh as present to him the Passion of the Lord;" and so great was his reverence that he deepened the faith and love of those who assisted at his Mass.

Dinner was at an hour which we should consider untimely and far too early, and was as in the East a public meal, at which the poor and the strangers were ever welcome to the open hall. The Archbishop sat at the high table under a canopy with his learned clerics on the one side, the monks on the other; while the laymen of his suite and his soldiers dined at a separate table, so as not to be forced to silence while a book was being read. The poor had their place in the hall as in monastic houses. The fare was plenteous, so that much might be left to give away. A splendid service of plate graced the hospitable board, the same as had been used by his predecessors. His style of living for so many years and the state of his health made it impossible for him to adopt an austere diet; but in the midst of delicacies he was most abstemious, and his chief food was bread, and his drink water in which fennel had been boiled. A critical guest one day ventured to make a remark about his dainty dishes. "Certes, brother," he rejoined, and Herbert de Bosham was there to endorse his words, "if I am not mistaken, you eat your beans with greater greediness than I do my pheasant." After dinner St. Thomas used to spend some time in his private room discussing matters ecclesiastical, and now and again when exhausted he took a short rest. Oftentimes he

was to be found in the cloister, in those days the centre of monastic life and the place of study, conning some learned work. He loved to visit the infirmary, because he found there exercise for his charity with the sick monks. Much of his time was taken up in presiding over the highest ecclesiastical court of the realm. But all "the letters and prayers of the King," so a contemporary tells, "were useless, unless a man had right on his side."

A skilful lawyer, of clear judgment, he would not hear of any presents from suitors either for himself or for others about him, nor would he allow fees which had even the appearance of a bribe.

His old passion for almsgiving did not grow less when his own life became more simple and he had more to give. In fact, as his predecessor had doubled the amount hitherto given, St. Thomas gave twice as much as Theobald, "the tithe of all he possessed." Hospitals and poor colleges shared largely in his alms, and the sick poor, the old and needy, upon whom he could not attend himself, he gave in charge to his household, feeding and clothing and providing for them.

The Chancellor-Archbishop in his brilliant secular attire was a strange contrast to the black-robed monks, as he sat with them in choir. He answered with tears and silence a rebuke administered to him on that score, yet, for fear of offending by too sudden a change, he for a time continued to wear his former dress; but from the week of his ordination he always wore beneath it a complete suit of hair-cloth next his skin. This was a secret known only by two others during the lifetime of our Saint. After a few months he assumed the simple habit of his old masters the Canons Regular of Merton—a long robe of poor black stuff, with a surplice over it. As long as he was in his province, he always wore a stole, as the Pope does in our day, at once as the emblem of authority and so as to be ready any moment to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation when on a journey through his diocese. His pastoral staff was of the simplest, being of pear wood with a crook of horn.

The news of St. Thomas's change of life was unpleasant hearing to the King, who saw clearly that the Arch-

bishop's words were coming true, and that he was sure to prefer his duty to the royal pleasure. A further proof was his resignation of the dignity of Chancellor, whereupon the King angrily ordered him to resign the Archdeaconry of Canterbury. Other minor matters of dissension quickly arose, but for a time it seemed that the old friendship between Henry and St. Thomas was still unbroken; and we meet them both in Westminster Abbey, where, on October 13, 1163, the King and his highest nobility carried the body of St. Edward the Confessor, still incorrupt, from its first resting-place to the shrine in which, thank God, it still reposes.

The lands of the Church, the deposit of private generosity for God's service for the poor and the orphan, have always been an object of greed to powerful and worldly men. The same spirit which in our days has torn the property of religious from its lawful owners, in France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, which suppressed the monasteries under the plea of reform, had led some rapacious Normans to lay hands on the property of St. Augustine's successors, a sacred trust which no Primate could in conscience forsake. St. Thomas demanded from the unjust occupiers the restitution of these church lands; and for the sake of the people of England he dared to refuse the payment of an unconstitutional tax: "the first case," to quote the learned Protestant Bishop of Oxford, "of any opposition to the King's will, in the matter of taxation, which is recorded in our national history." [1] From the earliest days of the Church the trial of ecclesiastics was reserved to ecclesiastical courts, and some unhappy cases—very much exaggerated and few in proportion when we recollect the immense number of clergy secular and regular at the time—afforded the King a pretext to complain of this immunity from civil courts. Henry openly broke with the Archbishop, and demanded that all clerical offenders should be handed over to his judges. St. Thomas found that he must expect no real support from his fellow-bishops. The undue influence of the Crown, exerted as it in fact had been in his own election, was not likely to promote the most worthy to the English sees; and the horrible out-

[1] Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, vol. i. p. 463.

rages which the King committed in his fits of anger required a martyr's spirit to stand firmly for the right. Brutal and overbearing, Henry reproached St. Thomas with his mean origin and his ingratitude. "In truth I am not sprung of royal race; no more was Blessed Peter, to whom God gave the Headship of His Church." "It is true," rejoined the King, "but he died for his Lord." "I too will die for my Lord, when the time comes."

St. Thomas, however, found in the reigning Pope, Alexander III., the greatest sympathy and support, spite of the constant embassies on which the courtier prelates went to further the royal cause. Pressed on all sides, urged that submission to the royal wishes was only asked to save the King's honour, and would never be acted upon, falsely assured that it was the Pope's desire that he should give way, St. Thomas engaged to observe the royal customs as hitherto permitted in the realm. A council was summoned at Clarendon, in Wiltshire. But, before he reached the place of meeting, the Archbishop had come fully to doubt the reserve which Henry had made, and determined never to renew in public the promise he had made; and the King, who learnt his intentions, spared no menace, no entreaty by himself or by his courtiers, to wring from him a ratification of this promise. At last he succeeded, but when a list of these pretended customs were drawn up, known to us as the Constitutions of Clarendon, Thomas absolutely refused to affix his seals to the document.

In these Erastian days many of these customs are looked upon as the natural rights of the Crown, or of the state which rules in its name. And no wonder if three centuries of submission to the yoke which Tudor statecraft and tyranny fixed on the neck of the State religion —so odd a compromise between old and new—have made subservience a second nature to the Church of England by law established. But to any one who believes the Church to be God's own, and of God's fashioning, its liberty is of divine right, and the defence of that liberty, as St. Thomas told King Henry, is the cause of God. That ecclesiastics should be tried only by ecclesiastics is one of the oldest laws of the Christian Church, and is a privilege which was acknowledged by

all lawyers in those days, and one grounded on solid reasons. The Constitutions of Clarendon were such a blow to the rights and liberty of the Church that they left it at the mercy of the royal caprice, and were in fact the forerunners of the bondage which four hundred years later was to crush out the life of the English Church, tear it from the communion of Catholic unity, and from the crook of Peter to place it under the sword of a Tudor. All questions about presentations to livings were to come before the King's court; all ecclesiastics, when summoned by the King, no matter on what ground, must appear before him, and no power of the Church could protect them from his sentence; no one, not even bishop or archbishop, might leave the kingdom without royal license; no tenant of the Crown nor any of the court could be excommunicated without the King's leave; all appeals were in the last resort to be brought before the King; the lands and belongings of vacant dioceses, abbeys, or priories were to be in the King's hands, and all appointments to bishoprics were to be made in the Chapel Royal under the King's eye and guidance.

St. Thomas, as he rode homewards, overheard the outspoken words of his faithful followers, who condemned the promise thus wrung from him, and he humbly owned with sobs and tears the gravity of his fault. "I have been taken," he said, in all the bitterness of self-reproach, "not from the Church, but from the court, not from the school of our Saviour, but from the service of Cæsar, a proud man—*pastor avium*, *pastor ovium*—a feeder of hawks to be a feeder of sheep." For forty days he deemed himself unfit to celebrate Holy Mass, and sent in all haste to ask pardon from Alexander III. for his fall, if indeed fall it was. But the fault if any was nobly repaired. Not that he left any means untried to secure peace, even submitting for the Pope's approval the Constitutions of Clarendon, an approval which the Pope was not inclined to grant. St. Thomas went to the King in his palace at Woodstock, the home of the guilty Rosamund Clifford, but he was refused entrance. He then tried as unsuccessfully to cross the Channel.

The secret of his attempted flight got out, and the King determined to wreak his vengeance on the Archbishop. Summoned before a Council at Northampton

St. Thomas was subjected to a series of accusations,—of contempt of court for delaying his appearance, and of arrears of moneys owing to the King during his Chancellorship, amounting to thirty thousand marks. The King eventually aimed at extorting from him a resignation of his see. St. Thomas was a guest of the monks of St. Andrew's Abbey, so magnificently restored by Simon de Senlis, the Earl of Northampton and Huntingdon, a kinsman of the King, and brother of the second Abbot of New Melrose, St. Waltheof. Having said Mass at the altar of St. Stephen, the Archbishop, full of the martyr's spirit, would fain have gone vested as he was with mitre, chasuble, and pallium, and with bare feet, to hear his sentence at the lips of the King. His friends begged him to desist, so laying aside his mitre, he covered his vestments with the ample black robe he usually wore, and armed with his cross, and with the Blessed Sacrament concealed about him, he went into the castle, then the royal court. As he entered the audience-hall, the bishops who had deserted his cause slunk off to the King, who was in an inner chamber. They begged to be excused from taking part in the sentence, and so this task fell to the nobles. St. Thomas in turn forbade them to pronounce the sentence, and in appealing from it to the Pope, summoned the bishops to appear before His Holiness. So saying he arose and left the castle, while the courtiers cried "Rebel!" and pelted him with knots of straw. As he passed out of the castle gates, the faithful poor were there to greet him. "Blessed be God," they cried, "who has saved His servants from the fear of His enemies!"

"When they persecute you in one city, fly unto another." These warning words occurred that day in the public reading in the monastic refectory. St. Thomas heard them, and looked significantly at his faithful friend, Herbert de Bosham. Before morning he had ridden through the heavy rain and slush of an October night as far as Grantham, and while Herbert was making the best of his way to Canterbury to secure money and treasure for his master, St. Thomas, disguised as Lay-brother Christian, pushed forward, with great sufferings, through Lincolnshire and Bedfordshire to

Sandwich, where he embarked in a small boat, and crossing the Channel landed in what then was Flanders, near Boulogne. Worn out with the journey and fatigued by his heavy clogs and habit, our Saint found he could go no further, and lay down on the ground; and they were forced to borrow an ass to bear him to his journey's end. St. Thomas had to hasten on to escape the snares of the Count of Flanders, who was in league with Henry, and to put himself under the protection of King Louis of France. This sovereign received him with the greatest kindness. Both the Archbishop and his enemies sought and found the Pope in the city of Sens. His Holiness refused to send St. Thomas back to his persecutor, and, having read over the Constitutions of Clarendon, declared that some of them were utterly inadmissible. St. Thomas was recommended to seek a temporary shelter in the rich and pious Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny, afterwards the resting-place of his great successor, St. Edmund. There then, with his followers, he found what he had long desired, a life of retirement, of penance, of prayer and study. He begged the Pope to send him a Cistercian habit, and this he wore all the rest of his life. But peace he was not to find; for soon a crowd of poverty-stricken exiles, the relatives of the Archbishop and of all his faithful followers, came to the abbey. They had been sent thither by the cruel Henry as a fresh blow to the sorely stricken Archbishop. They brought the news that all the goods and lands of his see, and of his attendants, had been seized by the King, and that not only the relatives of his followers, but every one who had sheltered him in his flight, and all their relatives, had been put on shipboard under oath to go and show their sorrows and want, with their very babes at the breast, to the unwilling occasion of their sufferings. It is useless to follow all the intrigues by which Henry and his courtiers tried to ruin the Archbishop in the estimation of the Pope and of the French King. In his fury in turn he threatened and cajoled. He even made overtures to the antipope, who, under the Emperor of Germany's protection, kept the rightful successor of St. Peter out of his city.

1166. Spite of all this, Alexander III. made St. Thomas his Legate in England. After much long-

suffering and gentle warning, St. Thomas was forced to declare sentence of excommunication against some of the clergy and the Bishop of Salisbury, who had been so shamelessly guilty of schism and disobedience in furtherance of the royal schemes. Henry at once threatened all the Cistercian houses in his dominions if their brethren dared any longer to shelter the poor fugitive, and St. Thomas was forced to leave his harbour, not before God had manifested to him in plain words during prayer his future martyrdom. Louis generously provided for him in the royal abbey of St. Columba, in his good city of Sens, and there he spent the last four years of his life.

And four sad years they were. Continual injustices at home, continual intrigues abroad; the Pope deceived by the King's promises, or unfaithfully served by his legates; our Saint bullied and bated by his foes, abandoned by his friends, and even for a space by the King of France himself—such were the events of these weary years. But the poor were always faithful to Thomas, and Thomas was always faithful to his God. Once it would seem that even the Vicar of Jesus Christ had deserted him and his Master's cause. The Bishop of London, Gilbert Foliot, who all through had been a bitter adversary of our Saint, and a constant supporter of Henry, had managed to evade the excommunication which had fallen upon him, and celebrated his victory by singing High Mass in the Archbishop's own cathedral. But the Pope had not deserted Thomas. A fresh insult was the coronation of the King's son, the ill-fated Henry, against all the rights of Canterbury, in spite of the prohibition of the Pope, by Roger, Archbishop of York, who had been a life-long opponent of his Primate. The King's cousin, the Bishop of Worcester, would have protested against this fresh violation of the rights of St. Thomas had he been allowed to be present, and the King answered him, as the French Republic of to-day answers any show of Christian liberty on the part of the French clergy, by threatening to confiscate his revenues.

At last the sentence of interdict, the extreme penalty of the Holder of the Keys, so long threatened, so patiently withheld, was peremptorily ordered by the

Pope to be denounced on the realm, if after twenty days the King would not meet the Legates, and did not within forty days after that ratify his former proposals. One must have followed step by step all the tedious negotiations to have seen how extreme had been the forbearance of the Sovereign Pontiff, how fully justified his severity. The King suddenly yielded, so suddenly that we are almost forced to ask ourselves was he sincere, or rather had he not simply taken the cruel hint of one of his advisers, that the Archbishop "would be far better kept in his dominions, than kept out." The hurried coronation of the Prince points also to the same conclusion, "that if a crime," as a contemporary writer suggests, "were committed, the kingdom could not be punished on the King's account, as he would no longer be the ruler."

The Legates informed our Saint of the King's change of mind, and St. Thomas attended a meeting between the Kings of France and England, though uninvited, to show his willingness to meet the Pope's wishes and to be wanting in nothing to bring about a reconciliation. Scant signs of goodwill did Henry show, however, till, pressed by the bishops who had come with St. Thomas, he made the fairest speeches, refusing only, as he had done before, on the plea of a rash oath he had taken, to give the kiss of peace, the natural seal of reconciliation. "To-morrow," Henry had said to King Louis on the eve of the meeting, "that thief of yours shall have peace, and a good one too." "What thief, pray, by the Saints of France?" "That Archbishop of Canterbury of yours," was Henry's answer. St. Thomas understood the words; he was ready, he said, for peace sake to lay down his life for his sheep. Nothing could exceed the King's apparent heartiness when at last they met. Henry was the first to salute; he even shook hands with the Primate, and embraced him so warmly that bystanders thought he must have forgotten his oath. Then they withdrew, and for nearly the whole day talked together, and so moving were the Archbishop's words, so earnest his manner, that when he flung himself from his horse and knelt at his sovereign's feet, the King at once dismounted, and holding St. Thomas' stirrup, made him resume his seat, exclaiming: "Let us be friends again

as of old, only give me the honour due to me in presence of these standers-by." It was the promise of the King that his son should be crowned again by St. Thomas that had made him show such reverence to Henry. The King actually signed a paper drawn up by St. Thomas ratifying all he had promised, and fully engaged to allow the Pope's sentence against the unfaithful Bishops to be carried into execution. All seemed satisfactorily settled, but Thomas knew his man too well, and declined to cross the seas till every rood of land that belonged to his see was restored; and the Pope and his Cardinals shared his distrust. Nor did the royal actions correspond with the royal word. At last the Sovereign Pontiff, while leaving full discretion to the Saint, placed in his hands the power as Apostolic Legate to lay England under interdict, and to pronounce sentence of suspension from their functions on all the Bishops concerned in the coronation of the heir to the throne, but urged him, spite of the King's evident duplicity, to return to Canterbury.

"We are going to England to play for heads," was the Archbishop's farewell to his friend and generous protector, the King of France, who in vain tried to persuade him to stay in that hospitable country, promising that he should want for nothing. The Primate's only reply, as they parted in tears, was "God's will be done." "Go in peace; I will see you at Rouen or in England," said Henry to Becket. "My Lord, my heart tells me that you will never see me again alive." "Do you think I am a traitor?" rejoined the King. Thomas merely answered, "No, my Lord." No less ominous was his good-bye to the Bishop of Paris, "I am going to England to die." He was obedient even unto death, and no soldier carried out his officer's order at the certain peril of life more faithfully than St. Thomas, who at the Supreme Pastor's wish went boldly to meet his fate.

Before sailing for England, St. Thomas sent forward the Pope's letters containing the suspension of the bishops. A brave nun was the bearer of the sentence to the Archbishop of York, and in the letter by which the Primate gave her the perilous charge, he reminded her of the Jewish heroine who conquered Holophernes

when stout men had failed, and again of the holy women who stood by our Lord when deserted by the Eleven. She was ordered to deliver the letter to Roger in presence of his fellow bishops, and give a copy of it to the bystanders. Seven years of dreary exile had passed when St. Thomas landed at Sandwich, and he was welcomed as ever by the poor, who ran out into the very waves to meet him, and accompanied him in triumph to his cathedral city. Amidst the ringing of bells, and the blast of trumpets, the pealing of organs, with the churches decked out as on high festival, the Archbishop, surrounded by his clergy, entered his church with a face that reflected the joy of his heart.

The bishops sent the following day, the 2nd of December, to ask to be freed from their censures, but St. Thomas, while willing to make every concession, could not take the matter out of the Pope's hands, but promised to refer it to him. Unhappily, Roger of York overbore the good intentions of the others, who were willing to submit to so reasonable a proposal, and while they left to their abettors the task of turning the heart of the young King against his former friend and guardian, crossed over to Normandy to fan the anger of the King. "What slothful wretches I have brought up in my kingdom," was Henry's outburst of fury, "who have no more loyalty to their King than to allow him to be so shamefully mocked by this low-born clerk!" He had sharpened his tongue like a sword, and there were those who were only waiting to carry his words into effect. While some of his nobles were urging on the King to rid himself of the Archbishop, four knights had sworn to take his life, and were crossing the Channel in search of their prey. Meanwhile St. Thomas, spite of the foreknowledge of his end, was calmly going about his duties, and making the official visitation of his diocese. He went to London specially to see the young King, and though clergy and people received him with hymns of thanksgiving, a peremptory order to return to Canterbury was the only answer to his request for an interview. How bitterly must the Prince have regretted his ingratitude, when on his bed of ashes he met his premature end!

St. Thomas celebrated his fifty-third birthday and the

feast of his patron saint in his own church, where a few days before he had held his last ordination. While singing the High Mass on Christmas Day he preached from the text, "And peace on earth to men of good will." In his sermon he spoke of his sainted predecessors, and said that as yet there had been amongst them but one martyr, St. Elphege—slain by the Danes—but that "it was possible that they might soon have another." The very day before, an apostate monk, Robert de Broc, one of a family of ruffianly desperadoes, had seized some of the Archbishop's effects on the high-road and maimed one of his horses. St. Thomas pronounced excommunication against him from the pulpit, and this news reached the four knights when they arrived at their rendezvous of Saltwood Castle, three days after Christmas Day, December 28th. St. Thomas a fortnight before had told his friend the Abbot of Albans, "I will go to celebrate such a feast in my church as the Lord shall provide me." When the morning of the 29th dawned the words were near their fulfilment, for the four knights, in company with the De Brocs, went together to Canterbury and, sad to say, found hospitality in St. Augustine's Abbey at the hands of the Abbot Clarembald, who, spite of the refusal of St. Thomas and of the Pope to approve his appointment, had been by royal favour intruded into his post of honour. The knights took their measures. They gathered together soldiers to prevent a popular rising, and in a dark afternoon of mid-winter at four o'clock they rode with the De Brocs and a dozen men-at-arms to the Archbishop's palace.

St. Thomas had recited the Matins at midnight in his room with some monks and ecclesiastics, and when they were done he opened a window and stood for a long time gazing out into the darkness. Then all of a sudden he turned and asked what o'clock it was, and whether there was time to reach Sandwich before dawn. He was told that it was still very early, and that there was plenty of time to go there and further. "God's will be done in me!" he said aloud. "Thomas will wait in his own church for whatever God has in store for him." He heard Mass in the cathedral, making a pilgrimage as he was wont to one altar after another and to the various

shrines. Then he spent in religious converse many hours with two of the holiest monks of the house, and made his confession with extraordinary sorrow, and readily accepted the penance, which was to scourge himself three times that day, a corporal austerity which he had long employed. Sure messages had come to him that his murderers had landed, and one of them had told a bursar of the abbey that Thomas would not be alive that night. When this was reported to the Archbishop he broke down, and weeping said: "They will find me ready to die; let them do what they like. I know and am certain that I shall die a violent death; but they shall not kill me outside my church." Still when he went to dinner, where a pheasant had been got ready for him, one of the monks could not but remark, "Thank God, I see you dine more heartily and cheerfully to-day than usual." "A man must be cheerful," was his reply, "who is going to his Master." His friends gathered round him in his room, as was their wont, when the meal was over, and St. Thomas sat upon his bed with monks and clerics at either side of him. Just then the four knights entered the wide open doors of the refectory, and a false servant showed them the way and announced them to his master. He bade them come in, and they unceremoniously seated themselves on the floor before the Archbishop and his companions. So they all sat in silence, till the Saint saluted them. But they only looked one at another, till Fitzurse broke the silence with a contemptuous "God help you!" They had come, he said, with the King's orders, and he wished to know whether he would hear them by himself or before the company. St. Thomas bade his friends depart, and the murderers, who were in armour but without their swords, had thought of killing him there and then with his cross; but when Fitzurse began to speak of the absolution of the bishops, St. Thomas called in those who had been with him and bade the knights tell, before them all, the wishes of the King. Fitzurse then ordered him in the King's name to go to the Prince and make amends by an oath of fealty for his treason, and, further, to absolve the bishops. St. Thomas pleaded that all he had done had been by the royal permission, and that he had already gone to see the young King but had been ordered to

return home. Fitzurse urged that to say Henry had permitted the suspension of the bishops was to brand his sovereign with treachery, and again, St. Thomas answered that his accuser and a crowd of others had been witnesses to all that had passed at his reconciliation with the King. The other knights joined in swearing that they had been too patient with the Archbishop. Fitzurse went on, "From whom do you hold your Archbishopric?" "Its spiritualities from God, and my lord the Pope; its temporalities and possessions from the King." "Do you not acknowledge that you have it all from the King?" "By no means; but we must give to the King what is the King's, and to God what is God's." And then he went on to detail the wrongs he had suffered since he had returned. "If any one transgresses the rights of the Church and refuses satisfaction, I shall wait for no one's leave to do justice." "These threats are too much!" they shouted. "Will he put the land under an interdict? No! he shall not do it. He has excommunicated too many already." They leapt up from the ground, and stormed at him like maniacs, flinging about their arms and twisting up their gloves. "I know that you have come to kill me. You threaten me in vain. If all the swords of England were pointed at my head they would not shift me from God's justice and from obedience to our lord the Pope. Foot to foot you will meet me in the battle of the Lord. Once I went away like a timid priest; I have come back by advice and command of the Pope. Never will I leave again." "We can do more than threaten," rejoined Fitzurse; "let us go!" Some of the Archbishop's soldiers and a number of his household had by this time gathered round him, and, as he turned to go, Fitzurse ordered them in the King's name to leave him, or to keep him in safe custody. "I am easy to keep," said the Saint, "I shall not go. I will fly neither for the King nor for any man." So saying, he followed them to the door, and laying his hand on his head, "Here, here," he said, "you will find me."

Meanwhile the soldiers of the knights had seized the great gate of the abbey, and mounted guard at the wicket. "To arms, men, to arms!" shouted the murderers, as they came out and went to put on their

swords in a house hard by. St. Thomas had gone back and sat down again on his bed, when the news was brought that the knights were arming. "What matter! Let them arm!" A long wail was heard from the people who were in the church, for they knew the end was at hand. Then the crash of a falling door and window in the hall told that the knights were breaking into the refectory, which had been closed against them. A number of the servants took refuge in the church, whither the monks would have forced the Archbishop to go. He resisted for a space, but when asked to assist at the Vespers, he made all go before him, and looked back to see whether any still lagged behind. Like Pius IX. on his escape from the Quirinal, he found a door closed on the way to the cloister, but two Brothers who happened to be passing tore off the bolt on the cloister side, and St. Thomas and his companions passed along the north and east passages of the cloisters. The murderers had made for the Primate's room, and not finding him there, went after him through the south walk of the cloister. The clank of their steel struck terror into the monks, and a number of them hurried to the west door of the north transept by which the Archbishop was entering. They begged him to come in, but he bade them retire, and refused to enter till they had left the entrance free. He wanted to go and meet the knights who were coming along the cloister, but the monks drew him in and barred the door after him. This he would not allow. "Go away, cowards! let the blind wretches rave! I order you in virtue of obedience not to shut the door; a church should never be turned into a castle." So saying he removed the bar with his own hands, and drew in his followers after him.

And now a word to make more clear the narrative that is to follow. The cloister is on the north side of the nave, and the door of which we have just been speaking opened out from it through the north-west wall of the north transept. Both transepts had an apsidal or semicircular chapel at their east end, and were then each separated from the church by a pillar supporting two arches, which no longer exist. The chapel in the north transept was dedicated to St. Benedict, the founder of the Benedictine Order. The apse was afterwards

destroyed to give place to a rich fifteenth century Lady Chapel. Outside the transept was, and is, the northern aisle of the cathedral, and as you went eastward one flight of steps led upwards to the level of the choir, and another to the crypt beneath. Westward was the northern aisle of the nave, which ended in the old Lady Chapel, behind which, and facing St. Benedict's altar, was a statue of the Virgin Mother, where the Saint oftentimes had been wont to pray.

The twilight of Christmastide had faded away when, about five o'clock, the knights entered the church. In full armour, with their visors down, they carried their drawn swords in their right hand, and in their left the carpenters' axes they had snatched up to break into the hall. A band of soldiers followed them, with some burghers whom they had forced along with them. The Archbishop was before the altar of St. Benedict in the north transept. All his followers, save three, had fled to hide themselves, and the three were his old friend the Prior of Merton, and two of the Saint's future biographers, Edward Grim and Fitzstephens. They forced him up the steps leading to the choir. "Unhand me," then he said, "and go away. There is nothing for you to do here. Let God dispose of me according to His will." "Where is the traitor?" cried one of the soldiers. But no answer came from out of the gloom. "Where is the Archbishop?" asked Fitzurse from some one against whom he had run. "Here I am, then," answered St. Thomas, "no traitor, but the Archbishop." So saying, he came down the steps, and, turning to the right, stood with his back to the eastern wall of St. Benedict's chapel, with the altar to his right, his cross, borne apparently by Grim, who alone stood by him, on his left, before him our Lady's statue, at which he had been wont to pray. Some one struck him on the shoulder with the flat of a sword, saying, "Fly, or you are a dead man!" "I will not fly." The knights were now before him, and one of their band, a fallen subdeacon, named deservedly Mauclerk, the wicked cleric, bade him absolve the excommunicated Bishops. "I will do nothing more than I have said and done," was his reply. "Reginald, Reginald," he said to Fitzurse, "I have done you many favours, do you come against me

in arms?" "You shall know it. Are not you a traitor?" was the answer. "I do not fear your threats," replied the Saint, "for I am prepared to die for God; but let my people go, do not touch them." Then they closed with him, and tried in vain to drag him from the church, for he clasped the pillar at his side, and in the struggle nearly threw one of the knights to the ground.

Fitzurse flung away the axe he held in his left hand, and, swinging round his double-handed sword, cried, "Strike, strike!" The Saint bowed his head, and covered his face with his hands, saying, "I commend myself to God, to Holy Mary, to Blessed Denys, and St. Elphege." William of Tracy struck, and Grim stretched out his arm to stay the blow, which nearly cut it in two. The sword glanced first on the Saint's tonsure, and then went through his vestments to his shoulder. Grim fled to the altar of St. Benedict. The Saint wiped away the blood from his head, saying thankfully, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." A second blow struck him, but he did not stir. Then a third, and he fell on his knees, and then upon his face. His head was towards the altar of St. Benedict. Grim overheard his last words, though almost a whisper. "For the Name of Jesus, and the defence of the Church, I am ready to die." Another knight, who had hung back, at the gibes of his fellows struck at him as he lay on the pavement with such force that he cut off the top of the skull, so that it hung only by the skin, and his sword flew into fragments. Then the impious Mauclerk, planting his foot on the Martyr's neck, scooped out the brains with his sword point, and scattered them on the ground. "Let us go!" he exclaimed, "the traitor is dead, he will not rise again!" Alone of the four Hugh de Moreville had not dyed his hands in the Martyr's blood, but he had taken his part in the crime by keeping back the people. For well-nigh five hundred years that blood-shedding stayed off the schism, and is a promise of a richer harvest in God's own time. At once St. Thomas was acclaimed a Martyr, and though for a twelvemonth the desecrated Church was under the ban, his body was glorified by God as a centre of miraculous power to which the blind, and the halt, and the lame, came to find strength and health.

There was small repentance, save in show, on the part of the guilty King; but when the Scots attacked him in the North, and his son and heir, with many of his chief barons, rose against him in Normandy, barefooted and as a poor pilgrim he made a penitential visit to the Martyr's tomb, and there, baring his shoulders, allowed himself to be scourged by the prelates and monks, and spent the night in prayer at the shrine, not suffering a carpet to be spread for him, nor his mud-stained and bleeding feet to be washed. Next morning he left, bearing with him a little leaden phial, the badge of the Canterbury pilgrim, containing water which had been mixed with the Saint's blood. The continuous stream of pilgrims which made a track across the Kentish downs never failed till the faith was eclipsed in this land of ours.

Four places in the Cathedral of Canterbury were the stations of the pious pilgrim. There was the altar "at the point of the sword," built on the spot where St. Thomas received his death wound. Then there was his tomb in the crypt, the scene of so many miracles and of the penance of the King, where for fifty years his remains had rested, and where precious relics of the Saint were preserved. The chapel, so well known as Becket's crown, where in a costly reliquary reposed the portion of the Saint's skull, severed at the martyrdom, was the third station. The shrine itself, behind the high altar, dazzling with the light of precious stones, was the fourth. Another Henry spoiled the shrine, and then condemned our Saint in a mock trial for contumacy, treason, and rebellion, and by the sentence of the court his bones were burnt and scattered to the wind. *Exoriatur ex ossibus ultor?* May God in His loving revenge give back to England the faith of St. Thomas!

Saint Teresa.

BY DAVID LEWIS.

St. Teresa was born in Avila, in the kingdom of Spain, March 28th, 1515, and baptized in the Church of St. John Baptist, April 4th, Wednesday in Holy Week. On that day Mass was said for the first time in the monastery of the Incarnation of the Order of Carmel, where she spent so many years of her life as one of the religious of that house.

Her father, Don Alfonso Sanchez de Cepeda, of an old and honourable race, was twice married and twice widowed. His first wife was Doña Catalina del Peso y Henao, by whom he had three children, one girl and two boys. His second wife, Doña Beatriz Davila y Ahumada, was the mother of nine children, seven boys and two girls. The elder of the two daughters, and the third child of the marriage was St. Teresa, known for many years of her life as Doña Teresa Sanchez Cepeda Davila y Ahumada.

Don Alfonso was a man of solid piety, most charitable to the poor and the sick, very gentle and considerate with his servants. Doña Beatriz also took all pains to bring up her children in the fear and love of God, devout to our Lady and the saints, and thus laid the foundations of the spiritual life of her daughter, who, before she was seven years old, would give alms out of the little money she had, and contrive to be alone that she might say her prayers, especially the Rosary. St. Teresa in playing with the other children would delight in imitating religious, and she tells us that she believed she wished to be a nun, but yet not so much as she wished to be a hermit or a martyr.

She and one of her elder brothers read lives of saints together. When she read of martyrdom it struck her that this was a very small price to pay for the vision of God, and

discussed with her brother how they could obtain it. The two children agreed that they must go to Africa, where the Moors would behead them because they were Christians. They resolved to execute their purpose, meaning to beg as they went, and so they left their father's house by stealth. They had got as far as the gates of the city when they were met by one of their uncles, who took them home, to the great relief of their mother, who was sending the servants into the streets of the city in search of her missing children.

Disappointed in their hopes of martyrdom, the two children resolved on leaving the world and making themselves hermits in their father's garden. They collected stones to build their cells, but their inexperience defeated them; the stones fell down from the walls they raised, and they knew not how to make them firm. St. Teresa was barely seven years of age when she did this, and she was perfectly serious in her childish way.

Her mother, always in delicate health, died towards the end of the year 1528 or in the beginning of the next, to the great sorrow of the Saint, who in her trouble went to the Church of our Lady of Charity in the hospital of the city, where strangers and pilgrims were lodged. There before her image she implored our Lady with tears to be to her a mother. Her prayer was heard, and she relates that in all her trials she was always succoured whenever she called upon that compassionate mother.

Early in 1531 her eldest sister married; in her too she had another most tender and loving mother, who watched over her with a jealous eye, and in whom she could detect nothing but goodness. On the departure of the sister for the country where her husband lived, Don Alfonso took the Saint to the monastery of the Augustinian nuns, who had a school for persons of her age and condition, for she was too young to be left at home as mistress of her father's house. She however, always accusing herself, says that the reason why her father sent her from home was her own giddiness and vanity. She had become fond of dress, she says, took pains with her hands and her hair, made use of perfumes, and was very fastidious about her person. There were also some cousins who frequented the house, and who could not well be refused admittance, though Don Alfonso much

regretted their presence. With one of these the Saint was too familiar, as she says, and too fond of listening to her stories of her follies. Teresa was also fond of reading, and continued so all her life, but at this time she spent much time in reading the romances of the day, tales of chivalry. This habit she had acquired under her mother, who used to amuse herself with these books in order to forget, if she could, the great bodily pains to which she was subject. All this however was kept secret, and Don Alfonso knew nothing of it.

The Saint was very much distressed when taken to the monastery, regarding her removal from home as a punishment, and for about a week suffered much—more, however, on account of a suspicion she had that her vanity was known than from her seclusion in the convent. She went to confession as soon as she could, and she was more contented than she would have been at home. All the nuns were pleased with her, for our Lord, she tells us, had given her the grace to please everybody. And indeed it is known that she was a most winning and charming woman.

She was most open with her confessors; and now in the convent having told all about herself she was consoled by hearing that in all those things which she calls her vanities she had not sinned. She became fond of the religious, Doña Maria Brizeño, who slept in the dormitory of the seculars, and took great delight in her conversation. Doña Maria, a person of great sanctity, whose conversation was such as became her state, made a great impression on the Saint, and removed from her mind in some measure the dislike she had to be a nun. "If I saw any one weep in prayer I envied her, for my heart was now so hard that I could not shed a tear if I read the Passion through." She said many prayers, and used to ask the nuns to pray for her that she might learn how she was to serve God; but she did wish not to be a nun and that God would not call her to religion; at the same time she was afraid of marriage. She remained in the monastery a year and a half, but towards the end she had a greater inclination towards the religious life; not however in that house. She had a friend, Doña Juana Suarez, in the monastery of the Incarnation, and that determined her to be a nun, if a nun she must be, of the Order of Carmel.

These good thoughts vanished, and she says that afterwards she could not persuade herself to become a nun.

She had a serious illness and was taken home. On her recovery it was settled that she should go to her married sister in the country. She stopped on the way at the house of Don Pedro, her father's brother, who detained her for some days. He was a widower, and spent all his time in devotion, and at last giving up all his possessions became a friar. He made the Saint read to him; and though she did not like his books she appeared as if she did, for she would always sacrifice her own pleasure for that of others. The conversation of her uncle made an impression upon her, and she understood the truth she had heard as a child that all things are nothing and the world vanity. "I also began to be afraid" she says, "that if I were then to die I should go down to hell." She could not however bend her will to become a religious, though she saw it was the best and the safest course. Nevertheless by degrees she did violence to herself, and made up her mind to give herself wholly unto God.

This struggle with herself lasted three months, but she does not seem to have communicated her trouble to any one. Teresa trod the wine press alone, and would say to herself, when she thought of her own delicate nurture, her poor health, the fainting fits to which she was now subject, that she could not endure the hardships of the religious life; and then would answer herself that the sufferings of a nun cannot be greater than the pains of purgatory, that she deserved to be in hell, and that it would not be much to spend the rest of her life in purgatory and win heaven. During those months of her inward trials she became fond of reading good books, which helped her very much, especially the epistles of St. Jerome. At last she told her father of the resolution to be a nun. Don Alfonso was a good man, but his love of his child prevailed; and she had more of his love than any of his children. He refused his consent, and neither the prayers of his child, nor the entreaties of others could move him. He was as resolute in refusing as she was resolute in going. All she could get from him was that she might do as she pleased after his death. The Saint saw the danger of delay, and made up her mind to execute her purpose at whatever cost.

While preparing herself to obey the call of God, Teresa persuaded one of her brothers to become a friar. The brother and sister laid their plans, and early one morning secretly left their father's house—he for the Dominican house in Avila, she for the monastery of the Incarnation where her friend Doña Juana Suarez was a religious. "I remember perfectly well," she wrote afterwards, "and it is quite true that the pain I felt when I left my father's house was so great that I do not believe the pain of dying will be greater; it seemed as if all the bones in my body were wrenched asunder." This was on Nov. 2, 1533, the feast of All Souls.

She went to that monastery because she wished to be with her friend, but would have gone to any other if she could have served God more faithfully in it, or to any convent that her father preferred. God led her by her natural affection for that nun, while she was trampling on a greater natural affection—her love of her father. The nuns received her, but at the same time sent word to Don Alfonso. The father hurried to the monastery, but he returned home without his child; God changed his heart, and he made the sacrifice demanded of him.

The novitiate seems to have been a cross. "I suffered much uneasiness," she says, "about things in themselves of no importance, was found fault with very often when I was blameless. I bore it painfully and with imperfection. However I went through it all because of the joy I had in being a nun. When they saw me seeking to be alone, and even weeping over my sins at times, they thought I was discontented, and said so." She confesses too that she was vain in some things: she did not know how to use the Breviary or how to behave in choir; she knew the other novices could have taught her, but "I never asked them," she says, "that they might not know how little I knew." She says her singing was bad, that she made mistakes and was ashamed of doing so in the presence of the nuns. But at last she asked to be instructed in her part before she entered the choir; it was a pain to her at first, and then it became a pleasure to do so. When she became indifferent about her good singing she sang much better, and she was

never vexed at its being known in the monastery that her singing was not good.

She conquered herself in another way: she had been brought up delicately, as became her state, but now she made an effort to overcome her fastidiousness. There was a nun ill in the house of a very loathsome disorder, and the nuns were afraid of it. Teresa, admiring the patience of the sick sister, became her nurse, and prayed to have the like patience whatever illness might befall her. God heard her prayer, and in less than two years she was stricken down and to all appearance beyond the reach of human help.

But before this came to pass she made her profession, at the end of her year of novitiate. When the time had come she had to do violence to herself again: the tempter made another effort to keep her in the world, as if he knew the great things she was to do. Teresa fought the battle alone, confiding her trouble to no one, and no one saw any sign of the inward tumult. She made her profession, and was filled with a great joy which she never lost.

This joy had now to be tempered with bodily illness of no common kind—a disease of the heart accompanied with pains so sharp at times as to deprive her of consciousness. The physicians of Avila had no remedies for it, and her father took her out of the monastery that she might be put under the care of a woman in Bezadas, who had a name for the treating of infirmities like those of the Saint. As the monastery was not enclosed, her friend Doña Juana was allowed to accompany her. They went first to their uncle's house; then to her sister's, where she spent the winter. There the Saint read a book called Tercer Abecedario, which treats of prayer, and resolved to follow the way of prayer described in it. She had now the gift of tears and found pleasure in reading, loved to be alone and went often to confession: but she had no one who would teach her how to make her prayer. Teresa made great progress notwithstanding, but she did not know it, nor did she understand her own state. "I spent," she says, "nearly nine months in the practice of solitude," and all this while our Lord Himself was her teacher. "He raised me," she says, "to the prayer of quiet, and now and then to that of union,

though I understood not what either the one or the other was, nor the great esteem I ought to have had of them."

In April, 1536, she went to Bezadas, but the rough treatment made her worse, and the three months of her stay there brought her almost to death's door. The pain at the heart was so sharp and unendurable that those about her feared it might end in madness. She loathed all food, and could do no more than drink that which they gave her: her bodily weakness was extreme, and with it all she was overwhelmed in great sadness.

But God gave her patience, she bore all her sufferings without a murmur, remembering the history of Job, and his resignation to the will of God. They brought her home to Avila in a state worse than that in which she had left it. In August, when the feast of our Lady was at hand, Teresa asked for her confessor. Her father thought that she was afraid she was going to die and would not listen, hoping thereby to quiet her. "That very night," she says, "my sickness became so sharp that I remained insensible for nearly four days." She had the last Sacraments, and was expected to die every moment. Her father was inconsolable now, because he had kept her from confession.

They dug her grave in the monastery, and the Carmelite fathers sung the *Requiem* for her; for all believed that she must be dead. She recovered, however, and insisted on going to confession at once. Of that confession she says that it was of all her faults, "for this grace among others did our Lord bestow on me, that ever since my first Communion I never failed to confess everything which I thought was wrong, even if it were only a venial sin."

But she was still so ill that she could not swallow even a drop of water; she was bent, as she says, "like a coil of ropes," unable to move any part of her body except one finger of her right hand. She could not bear to be touched, and they had to move her in a sheet. Even in this state Teresa would return to her monastery; and she did so in a most pitiable condition, which lasted more than eight months. She was paralysed for about three years, and praised God when she was able to crawl on hands and knees; that she regarded as nothing compared with the

tortures she had undergone, and was content to remain in that state if that was the will of God.

Her longing for solitude, that she might give herself to prayer, made her wish for health; in the infirmary solitude was impossible. But she was not idle; she observed such exact measure of her words as to keep herself and those with whom she conversed from all detraction, and it was understood in the monastery that when she was present, absent persons were safe. She confessed and communicated more frequently, read much, but very often did not venture to pray, on account of the bitter anguish which came upon her because she had offended God. She was also kept from prayer because she did not see much improvement in herself, though she made good resolutions. Even her tears and contrition made her angry with herself.

Teresa had a great devotion to St. Joseph. The physicians of this world, she says, had failed her, and so she went to those of heaven. She had Masses said and prayers made for her: her wish for health prevailed, and St. Joseph healed her; he "my lord and father," she writes, "delivered me, and rendered me greater services than I knew how to ask for."

She tells us that having recovered her health she began to forget the practices of her earlier days. She had to frequent the parlours of the monastery, and in many ways had as much freedom allowed her as the older nuns; but she confesses that she never abused it. She had many friends, and was herself so winning in her ways that people eagerly sought her. One day while with one,—it was at the beginning of her acquaintance with her,—our Lord stood before her, "stern and grave" and made her see that her conduct displeased Him. "I saw Him," she says, "with the eyes of the soul more distinctly than I could have seen Him with the eyes of the body," and she resolved never to see that person again. Satan however prevailed; she was made to think it was an imagination, yielded to the temptation, and returned to her new friend. She was told there was no harm in seeing her, and that she gained instead of losing reputation by so doing. On another occasion in the parlour with that person, a great toad crawled towards them in their sight and in the sight of others who were there. She recognized this to be another warning, but no one told her she was in

the wrong except one of the nuns, then old, and a relative of the Saint. But even this did not restrain her—she frequented the parlour as before.

Teresa had now given up mental prayer, though in the beginning of her illness she had helped others to pray, and among them was her own father, whom she brought to adopt the practice of mental prayer. He made great progress in it, and that delighted the Saint. He came often to the monastery for he found great comfort in speaking of the things of God. This was another torture to his daughter, who for a year and more gave up the practice thinking it an act of great humility to abstain. She was always honest, so she told her father that she did not pray; she alleged her health as her excuse, and that she could do no more than pray with the community. He believed her, but was sorry for her, for he had found the treasure of prayer himself. He came to the monastery as usual, and having seen his daughter, would quickly go away saying that he was wasting his time.

Though Teresa gave up her practice of mental prayer, she intended to resume it; she "was waiting to be very free from sin first," yet she was unable to mention a single mortal sin, and during the whole of this time her confessors found no fault with her. This false humility was about to be corrected, for her father fell ill, and she, not being bound to enclosure, had leave to nurse him in his sickness, which was his last. He died as he had lived, to the great joy of the Saint, who nevertheless felt acutely her loss, for he was to her all the comfort and good of her life, and she his most cherished child. Her father's confessor was the Dominican friar, Father Vicente Baron, and to him she made her confession, giving him at the same time an account of her whole life, and of her mental prayer which she had abandoned. The Father charged her to resume her prayer, never to omit it, and to go to Communion once a fortnight. Obedient to his directions, her life became a burden, because she learnt in prayer more and more her faults; she took delight in the things of God, but she frequented the parlour, and tried to reconcile the life of the spirit with that of sense.

She persevered in prayer; and God rewarded her so abundantly, that she, looking upon herself as a great sinner, felt these graces of God as "a fearful kind of torment."

She dreaded the time for prayer for she knew no penance she would not have more willingly endured than going to her oratory to pray.

God visited Teresa in visions and revelations, and she, still thinking herself to be a most miserable sinner, began to be afraid of delusions. She saw that these visitations of God were inconsistent with her way of life, though she was labouring to mend it. She was raised to "the prayer of quiet and very often to that of union which lasted some time;" but her fears grew. She had no one to help her: and yet God Himself was directing her the whole time. She heard of some priests who would help her—the Fathers of the Society had come to Avila—but she "did not think herself fit to speak to them."

Teresa had heard of a learned priest in the city, greatly respected for his saintly life; she resolved to consult him, and contrived to do so, with the help of Don Francis de Salcedo, his friend, and a friend of her and her family. Don Francis, like his wife, was a man of prayer; after her death he became a priest, and was chaplain and confessor of the Carmelites of St. Joseph's which the Saint had founded. For twenty years of his married life he attended the theological lectures of the Dominicans in Avila. He brought that priest, Gaspar Daza, to the monastery of the Incarnation, and the Saint made known to him the state of her soul and her way of prayer, but he would not hear her confession. However he gave her strong counsel; but the Saint confesses that she could not have made any progress under his direction, although he had a special grace and gift for the conduct of beginners.

She was disappointed in this, but afterwards saw in the failure of Gaspar Daza that it was a grace of God "that I might know," she says, "and converse with persons so holy as the members of the Society of Jesus." But she was still afraid of them, and made Don Francis, the layman, her director; he helped her to overcome her imperfections by sound counsel and the story of his own difficulties with his own weaknesses. She improved under his direction, but Don Francis became afraid when she told him of the great graces she received in prayer. He being led by a different road could not understand it, and told her that he was afraid

she was under delusions. He asked her to explain to him her way of prayer: she replied that she could not, because she did not understand it herself. She was now greatly distressed and wept over her misery.

Teresa looked into certain books treating of prayer; she found in one of them a description of her way of prayer, and showed it to Don Francis, who took the book to Gaspar Daza that they might consider it together. They considered the matter, and came to the conclusion that the Saint was deceived by Satan. Don Francis in great distress went to her with the information, which she received with great fear and dread. While they were considering this matter, she had prayed earnestly, and had asked others to pray, that she might be delivered from her anxiety. This was the result: she was told that she was deluded, and that she had better make a general confession to Father Juan de Padranos of the Society of Jesus, and observe with the utmost faithfulness the counsel he would give her.

She wept, but obeyed at once, and began to prepare for her general confession. The Father came and understood her state; it was the work of the Holy Ghost, he said, but she must make her prayer more systematically, because the foundation of it had not been properly laid. She was to force herself to make her prayer, and mortify herself, because the graces which God had given her were so singular. It might be the will of God to do great things by her. She was to meditate daily on the Passion, and resist the extraordinary effects of her prayer till he gave her leave to yield to them.

Teresa was now in great peace, obedient to the new direction and resolved to advance by self-denial and careful observance of all her duties, to practise greater poverty by cutting off all superfluities. She disciplined herself even unto blood, praying earnestly that our Lord would keep her from falling again into her former ways.

At this time the Duke of Gandia, now Father Francis Borgia, of the Society, came to Avila. Her confessor and Don Francis de Salcedo brought him to the monastery of the Incarnation, that he might examine the spirit of the Saint. He heard her, and said that her state was the work of the Holy Ghost; she was not to resist the sweetness and joy

of her prayer as she had done for two months. This was a relief to her, and Don Francis himself was convinced that the Saint was not deluded.

Father Juan de Padranos was removed from Avila, and the Saint was in trouble again, not knowing how to find a confessor. One of her kinswomen obtained leave for her to come to her house, where she made the acquaintance of a lady given to prayer, Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, who took her to Father Baltasar Alvarez. "He began," says Teresa, "by putting me in the way of perfection." He insisted on her giving up certain friendships which were harmless, though she admits there was too much natural affection in them. She resisted at first, and asked him if she must be ungrateful. He replied that she was to lay the matter before God, and recite the *Veni Creator*. Then she, having prayed for some time, began the hymn, and while saying it fell into an ecstasy. This was her first, and in it she heard the words, "I will have thee converse not with men but with angels." She was afraid at first, but was comforted at the same time. From that day forth, she says, "I have never been able to form friendship with, nor have any comfort in, nor any particular affection for, any person whatever except those who, as I believe, love God and strive to serve Him." She gave up her friendships without pain either to herself or to her friends: they were even edified.

Now our Lord laid upon her one of the heaviest of crosses, the opposition of good people. The great work of our Lord in the soul of the Saint could not be hid, and those whom she had consulted did not all of them keep her secret. It became known that she had visions and revelations, and was unlike other devout persons in Avila. At this time her heart was pierced by the lance of the angel; and she made the vow of the highest perfection in all her actions. She had the consolation of learning from St. Peter of Alcantara that he approved of it and of all her ways.

Father Alvarez was now absent from Avila, and her confessor convinced himself, or seemed to do so, that her visions were illusions of Satan. He ordered Teresa to make the sign of the cross when she had a vision, to point her finger at it in scorn and be firmly persuaded of its diabolic nature. This was very hard, for the Saint had no doubt

about the visions; they were her treasure. She had defended herself as well as she could against the objections of those who knew of them, and had allowed them to say all they pleased without contradicting them; and they charged her with want of humility. This last counsel of the confessor distressed her beyond measure: but she obeyed, though it was most painful to her to make the sign of the Cross whenever she saw our Lord: "if they had cut me in pieces," she says, "I could not believe it was Satan." She held a crucifix constantly in her hand that she might not be continually making the sign of the Cross, and as for making signs of contempt she could not do so: it reminded her of the insults of the Jews. At last our Lord consoled her, saying that she had done well to obey, and that He would make them understand the truth of the matter. Even her confessors proved a source of trouble to her, though Father Alvarez always consoled her, even when he was compelled to be hard with her. God had raised her to a high degree of prayer, but had not given her the knowledge of it, nor the ability to describe it: that is her own account. Then, when she was called upon by those who examined her spirit to explain herself, she could do nothing but repeat over and over again the same thing. At a later time God enabled her to speak, and she has spoken as no one had spoken before, so fully and so clearly.

Of herself, thus writes Teresa when she had been forty years in religion:—"She occasionally heard interior locutions, had visions and revelations interiorly. She saw with the eyes of the soul, for she never saw anything with her bodily eyes, nor heard anything with her bodily ears: twice, she thinks, she heard a voice, but she understood not that which was spoken. It was a sort of making things present when she saw these things interiorly; they passed away like a meteor most frequently. The vision, however, remained so impressed on her mind, and produced such effects, that it was as if she saw those things with her bodily eyes and more."

When told that her visions were the work of an evil spirit, Teresa replied that it could not be, for Satan would not do anything to help her to correct her faults. Father Alvarez defended her always, but was often over-ruled by

those whom the Saint had been made to consult. Being very humble, he distrusted himself, and that occasioned trouble, for the others were very confident and remonstrated with him. When they were agreed that the visions of the Saint were the work of Satan, he told her to keep nothing hidden from him, and then if all her visions were the work of the devil she would come to no harm, for God would bring good out of evil. She obeyed him in everything, and for three years he had as much to suffer as she had. At last God made known to him the truth, and "I believe," says the Saint, "that he received this light from the Blessed Sacrament."

From first to last these trials of her spirit lasted six years; the more they tried her, the more she fell into a trance. Many prayers were made and many Masses were said that our Lord would "lead her by another way." But it was not the will of God; He had a great work for her to do, and He prepared her and directed her Himself through the furnace of that which was in reality the persecution or contradiction of good men, which is one of the greatest trials of saints.

There were nearly two hundred nuns in the monastery of the Incarnation, and the Saint longed for a solitary life. She was subject to visits within the monastery, and moreover her friends obtained leave for her to visit them at their houses. She was weary of this: and one day in her cell with others like minded, her niece, Maria de Ocampo, brought up under her care, said, in the midst of a conversation about a more retired life, that she would give a thousand ducats to build them a house, if they wished to be like the barefooted orders. Maria was young, not at all given to austerities, but very fond of dress. No sooner had she thus spoken than she had a vision of our Lord. Her offer was accepted, and she herself afterwards was among the early novices of the new Carmel, and later on Prioress of Valladolid.

The Saint communicated her desires and the offer of her niece to Doña Guiomar, who began at once to consider how to find a revenue for the new house. The Saint, however, was not over eager now; she had become fond of her monastery and of her cell, and could not make up her mind to leave them.

One day after Communion our Lord bade her found the house, and made her great promises; He would delight in it; it should be called the house of St. Joseph; though the religious orders were then relaxed she was not to think that He was scantily served in them, for what would become of the world if there were no religious in it; she was to tell her confessor all this, and that He asked him not to thwart her in the matter.

Teresa gave an account in writing of this to her confessor, who could not order her to abandon her purpose, though he saw no means of accomplishing it. He bade her tell her superior, the Provincial of the Order, and act according to his direction. She never spoke of her visions to the Provincial, who was told of the plan by Doña Guiomar. He was pleased, gave Doña Guiomar all the help he could, promising to accept the new convent. She wrote also to St. Peter of Alcantara, who approved of the whole proceeding.

Instantly a violent persecution befell the Saint: "sharp sayings and keen jests." People said it was folly: every body was against her. Doña Guiomar was even refused absolution, because she would not abandon the Saint, and was told she was bound to remove the scandal she had given.

Doña Guiomar laid the matter before a holy Dominican, Father Pedro Ibañez; the Saint also went to him, but never said a word about any revelation, confining herself wholly to ordinary reasons, for she would have his opinion without respect to visions and revelations. "He asked us to give him eight days before he answered, and also if we had made up our minds to abide by what he might say." "I said we had;" was the answer of the Saint, "but though I said so, and though I thought so, I never lost a certain confidence that the monastery would be founded. My friend had more faith than I: nothing they could say would make her give it up."

Father Pedro told them afterwards that he had at first made up his mind against the foundation; he heard of the cry against the Saint, and was warned to be cautious. But when he began to consider his decision he was changed; he recognised the hand of God, and not only bade the Saint go on but told her further how she was to accomplish

her end, and to send to him any one who objected and he would answer him. The Saint being now reassured and her friend consoled, a house was bought, and the deeds of purchase were prepared; but the day before the papers were to be signed the Provincial declined to acknowledge the house, moved thereunto by the opposition of the nuns in the monastery of the Incarnation.

People were now more certain than before that the Saint was doing a foolish thing, and hard words became more common. "I was now very much disliked throughout the whole monastery, because I wished to found another of stricter observance. It was said I insulted my sisters; that I could serve God among them as well as elsewhere, for there were many among them much better than I; that I did not love the house, and that it would have been better if I had procured greater resources for it instead of founding another. Some said I ought to be put in prison; others, but they were not many, defended me in some degree."

Notwithstanding all this she was very happy; she submitted joyfully to the will of God, for she had done all she could to fulfil His command; but she was unable to give up her conviction that the work would be done. Another trouble now befell her from an unexpected source. She received a letter from her confessor which seemed to charge her with disobedience. She was bid to acknowledge that all she had been doing was folly, and to abstain from her purpose because of the scandal she had caused. She humbled herself and set about examining her conscience; perhaps her visions were illusions and herself deceived. Her affliction was very great, but our Lord came to her relief: He bade her not to distress herself; she had pleased Him greatly, and not sinned in the whole affair. This so consoled her that she regarded the persecution she had suffered as nothing.

At this time God visited her in prayer in a more wonderful way; in violent impetuosities of divine love and more marvellous trances. She never spoke of the work herself, because of the commandment of her confessor, but the Dominican father was not bound to silence; he, being convinced that the new monastery was for the glory of God, communicated with Doña Guiomar; both of them wrote to

Rome, and made what preparations they could for the foundation.

It was now bruited abroad that the Saint had had a revelation, so her friends came to her in great fear, saying that the times were dangerous and that she might be taken before the Inquisitors. She laughed, for she was never afraid of them, and offered to go herself before the judges, being conscious that she would not break even the least ceremony of the Church. She gave an account of all her visions and revelations to the Dominican: he said there was nothing to be afraid of.

Teresa remained quiet for five or six months "neither thinking nor speaking of the matter," but not free from trouble, thinking her confessor Father Alvraez did not trust her. Then one day our Lord said to her "be not troubled, this suffering will soon be over." She was gladdened by the words because she thought that her death was nigh. She was very happy whenever those words came to her remembrance. That however was not the relief promised by our Lord: this was the arrival in Avila of the new rector of the Society, Father Gaspar de Salazar, to whom at the request of Father Alvarez, she made known her state. She used to feel the greatest repugance to speak of the graces God bestowed upon her, but now "when I went to the confessional," she tells us, "I felt in my soul something, I know not what, I do not remember to have felt so either before or after towards anyone. I cannot tell what it was, nor do I know of anything with which I could compare it. It was a spiritual joy, and a conviction in my soul that his soul must understand mine, that it was in unison with it, and yet, as I have said, I knew not how." She knew nothing of the rector, had never spoken to him before, and now found in him the guide she needed, and the direction fitted for her state. Father de Salazar spoke to Father Alvarez and told him to console the Saint, and not to direct her along a road so narrow, but to leave the operations of the Spirit alone.

Shortly after this our Lord began to urge the foundation of the new monastery, and bade the Saint lay the matter before the rector and her confessor. She was further required to tell Father Alvarez to make a meditation on Ps. xci. 6—*Quam magnificata sunt opera Tua.* Father Alvarez did

so, and from that day forth he never opposed the Saint's work.

The foundation of the monastery was now resumed in secret. But the Saint would do nothing against obedience, knowing however that if she spoke to her superiors in the Order all would be lost again as it was before. She asked her brother-in-law Juan de Ovalle to take a house in Avila. He consented. The house was bought for the Saint, with money furnished by two ladies who intended to become nuns and with money sent her by her brother Lorenzo in India. The Saint never expected it, and her brother knew nothing of her affair. When her brother and sister had come to Avila she had leave to visit them, and was thus enabled to direct the workmen who were to make the house a monastery, without exciting suspicion. Somehow or other suspicion was aroused, and one day when the Saint and her sister went to hear the sermon in the Dominican church, the preacher broke out in violent reproaches against those who had visions and revelations. It was impossible to mistake his meaning, which could hardly have been better expressed if he had uttered the name of St. Teresa. The Saint heard it without being in the least disturbed, but her sister was less patient; and took her out of the church back to the monastery of the Incarnation.

She was arranging the house in her poverty, for she had no money, and Doña Guiomar was in the same straits: once, having no money to pay the workmen, St. Joseph appeared and bade her employ them. She did so and the money came. She was told by our Lord that it was not expedient then to place the new monastery under the jurisdiction of the Order, and that she "must send to Rome in a certain way, which He also explained; He would take care that I found help there; and so I did," she says: "I sent to Rome as our Lord directed me, for we should never have succeeded otherwise, and most favourable was the result."

She returned to her brother-in-law, for her presence was necessary. One day, while her nephew, her sister's son, was amusing himself among the materials amassed for the building, a piece of wall badly built fell upon and killed

him. Nobody was by, and the child lay dead for some hours. His father was absent, and on his return found his child lifeless among the ruins. He lifted up the body and carried it straight to the Saint's room, laid it down before her and went out without saying a word. Meanwhile, the mother, observing the gloom that had overspread the house, and the silence of the servants, suspected some great calamity, and, with loud cries and tears, rushed into her sister's room. The Saint made her a sign to be silent. She then took the child into her arms, and covered him with her veil. No one heard her utter a word, but very soon the child began to caress his aunt, who at once gave him to his mother, and bade her kiss him. The child was not only alive, but without a sign of having been hurt; he was very fond of his aunt, and used to say to her that she was bound to see after his salvation, for he had been so near to the vision of God, but she had called him back. He survived her three years.

Don Juan de Ovalle had been in Avila since August 10, 1561, and towards the end of the year the difficulty of keeping the secret was becoming greater and greater. On the night of Christmas Day, the Saint received an order from the Provincial to go with one of the sisters to Toledo, for the consolation of Doño Luisa de la Cerda, who was in great distress on account of her husband's death. Doña Luisa had heard much of the Saint and of her great gifts, and, being a friend of the Provincial, obtained the order without difficulty. The Saint was troubled, "because," as she says, "they thought there was some good in me, I knowing myself to be so wicked, could not bear it." Thus it always was with her; she never saw herself as others saw her.

She set out immediately for Toledo with one of the nuns, and her presence was of the greatest service to Doña Luisa, who conceived a great affection for her, which she returned. She had been required by Father Pedro Ibañez to write for him an account of her whole life, and now in the house of Doña Luisa she finished that which she had begun in the Monastery of the Incarnation.

In Toledo she was visited by Maria of Jesus, who had been a novice in the Carmelite Monastery of Granada, and, during her novitiate, had revelations about a reform of the Order.

"Our Lord had moved her," says the Saint, "in the same year that He had moved me, to found another monastery of the Order: and as He had given her this desire she sold all she possessed and went to Rome to obtain the necessary faculties. She went on foot and barefooted," with two others of the Order of St. Francis. Pius IV. heard her petition, and then looking at her bleeding feet said, "Woman of strong courage, let it be as thou desirest." She returned to Granada, but the Carmelites and the town council would not allow her to found a house in the city; some even threatened to have her publicly whipped. It was from her that the Saint learnt that the old Carmelite rule enjoined absolute poverty. Not knowing this, she was about to found her house with revenues that the religious might be free from all anxiety about their temporal affairs, "not thinking," she says, "of the many anxieties which the possession of property brings in its train."

The Saint saw that poverty was the safe course, but feared that she could not obtain the assent of others to the adoption of so severe a way of life, that they would charge her with folly, and tell her that she must not be the cause of suffering to others. She had now for some time wished, if it were possible in her state, to go about a beggar for the love of God, to have no house of her own nor anything else.

She consulted the spiritual men of her acquaintance, as she did in everything, but hardly any one approved. They had such good reasons for their opinion that Teresa was willing to give up her own, and admit they were in the right. But when "I returned to my prayer," she writes, "and saw our Lord on the Cross, so poor and destitute I could not bear to be rich, and I implored Him with tears so to order matters that I might be poor as He was."

She wrote to her Dominican friend, Father Pedro Ibañez, who "sent back two sheets by way of reply," she says, "full of objections and theology against my plan, telling me that he had thought much on the subject. I answered that in order to escape from my vocation, the vow of poverty I had made, and the perfect observance of the counsels of Christ, I did not want any theology to help me, and in this case I should not thank him for his learning."

St. Peter of Alcantara at her request came to the house of Doña Luisa. He knew the worth of poverty, and charged

the Saint on no account to give way, and then our Lord Himself told her that the monastery must be founded in poverty; that it was His will and the will of His Father, that every one who served Him would never be in want of the necessaries of life. Father Ibañez came round to her views at last. "Now," says the Saint, "I was in the greatest joy at hearing this: and having these opinions in my favour it seemed to me nothing less than the possession of all the wealth of the world when I had resolved to live in poverty for the love of God."

When she had been about six months in Toledo the Provincial sent word that she might return to her monastery, but if she wished to remain she might stay. This was the time of the elections, and she was told that many of the nuns meant to elect her Prioress: "though willing to suffer any kind of martyrdom for God, I could not persuade myself at all to accept this, and so I gave thanks to God I was not then in the convent, wrote to my friends and begged them not to vote for me."

Glad to be free she would remain: but our Lord told her she must return to Avila, and that, as she longed for a cross, there was a cross prepared for her and a heavy one. She began to cry, thinking that the office of prioress was her cross and went to her confessor, who bade her go, for that was the more perfect course. Doño Luisa was very sorry, but acquiesced on being told that the parting was for the service of God. The Saint was distressed, and at the same time in great peace and joy because she was going to suffer. "Our Lord had told me," are her words, "that I was going to carry a heavy cross—though I never thought it would be so heavy as I afterwards found it to be—and yet I went forth rejoicing," Her absence from Avila was of service to her work, and her return at this time was necessary, for on the night of her arrival the Brief sought for in Rome was delivered to Doña Guiomar. St. Peter of Alcantara had also come and was staying in the house of Don Francis de Salcedo, but only for about eight days. He helped the Saint in all her labours, and now went with Don Francis to the bishop to do her another and greater service. He and Don Francis persuaded him to accept the monastery, though founded in poverty and a poor house, for it was very small. "Truly

this is the house of St. Joseph," said St. Peter of Alcantara, when he saw it, "for it is the little hospital of Bethlehem."

"Everything was done," says the Saint, "in the utmost secrecy; and if it had not been so, I do not see how anything could have been done at all: for the people of the city were against us, as it appeared afterwards. Our Lord ordained that one of my brothers-in-law should be ill, and his wife away, and himself in such straits that my superiors gave me leave to remain with him." This illness of Don Juan de Ovalle enabled her to make all the arrangements necessary without exciting suspicion. "It was very wonderful, for his illness lasted no longer than was necessary for our affair: and when it was necessary he should recover his health, that I might be disengaged and he leave the house empty, our Lord restored him: and he was astonished at it himself," for when he saw everything ready for the coming in of the religious, and his illness gone, he said to the Saint: "It is not necessary I should be ill any longer." He knew then why he had been ill.

Then on the feast of St. Bartholomew, Aug. 24, 1562, the Saint, being forty-seven years of age, and in the twenty-ninth year of her religious life, accompanied by two nuns of the Incarnation who also were outside their monastery at the time, but with the leave of the Provincial, took possession of the house of St. Joseph, the building of which had cost her so much labour and reproach, and founded the Carmel of the Barefooted. She gave the habit assisted by the two nuns, to four religious. Those were Antonia de Henao, a penitent of St. Peter of Alcantara, whom he had prepared and reserved for the new foundation. She was henceforth known as Antonia of the Holy Ghost. The second was Maria de la Paz whom Doña Guiomar de Ulloa had brought up, and kept for the house. The third was Ursola de los Santos. She retained her name, as Ursola of the Saints. She had been prepared for this by Gaspar Daza the priest to whom St. Teresa had consulted in the beginning of her troubles. The fourth was Maria de Avila, sister of Julian, the priest of that name, who remained faithful to the Saint in all her trials. She was called Mary of St. Joseph.

These were all received without a dowry; four poor

orphans, as the Saint called them, but very rich in grace, four corner stones of the new Order of Carmel; older also as Barefooted Carmelites than the Saint herself the foundress; for she was even now a nun of the Incarnation living under the Mitigated Rule, under the Provincial, and could not remain in the house of St. Joseph, any more than the two nuns who were with her; these were her cousins, Doña Inez and Doña Ana de Tapia. Gaspar Daza said Mass, at which were present Don Gonzalo de Aranda, Don Francis de Salcedo, Julian de Avila, her brother-in-law Don Juan de Ovalle, and his wife her sister Doña Juan de Ahumada. The bell of the chapel weighed less than three pounds, and remained there for a hundred years. It was then transferred by order of the General to the monastery of Pastrana, and there the members of the general chapter assembled at the sound of the bell which was rung for the first Mass of the barefooted nuns of Carmel.

Saint Teresa was in the house lawfully, with the leave of her superiors, and "I did nothing," she says, "without the advice of learned men, in order that I might not break in a single point my vow of obedience.—If they had told me there was the slightest imperfection in the matter I would have given up the founding of a thousand monasteries; how much more then this one?"

"I felt," says the Saint, "as if I was in bliss." She had obeyed her confessors in all things, and had done that which our Lord enjoined her: and for three or four hours was in great peace and joy. Then Satan began to torment her with scruples about obedience; with doubts about the perseverance of the religious in so austere a life, and even her own ability to live with them. Her distress became so great that she could think of nothing else, and her soul was plunged into darkness. "When I found myself in this state," she says, "I went and placed myself before the most Holy Sacrament, though I could not pray to Him; so great was my anguish that I was like one in the agony of death. I could not make the matter known to any one, because no confessor had as yet been appointed."

In this distress she promised our Lord to do all in her power to enter St. Joseph's, and if it could be done with a good conscience, to make a vow of enclosure. "When I

had done this," she writes, "the devil fled in a moment and left me calm and peaceful; and I have continued so ever since. The enclosure, penance and other rules of this house are to me, in their observance, so singularly sweet and light, the joy I have is so exceedingly great, that I am now and then thinking what on earth I could have chosen which should be more delightful."

This fight with Satan fatigued her greatly, and she wished to rest a little after dinner, but there was no rest for her to-day. The nuns of the Incarnation had heard of her doings and the Prioress sent for her. She went, leaving the four religious in great distress. She felt that there was more trouble for her, being persuaded that she would be put in prison. The thought of that however consoled her, because she longed to be alone, and in the prison of the monastery she would have solitude enough.

Teresa told everything to the Prioress, who was softened a little, but the Provincial must be told also. When he arrived at the monastery the Saint appeared before him to answer for her deeds. "I confessed my fault," she says, "as if I had been very much to blame; and so I seemed to every one who did not know all the reasons. After the Provincial had rebuked me sharply, though not with the severity my fault deserved, nor according to the representations made to him, I would not defend myself, for I was determined to bear it all: on the contrary, I prayed him to forgive and punish, and be no longer angry with me."

The Provincial ordered her to explain her conduct before the Community, and she obeyed. She spoke so well that neither the Provincial nor the nuns condemned her; and later on she spoke to the Provincial alone, who was so satisfied that he promised to let her go back to St. Joseph's as soon as the city was calm again.

The town council and even the Canons of the Cathedral were disturbed. They held a solemn meeting to which the heads of the religious were invited, and resolved that the new monastery must be broken up. Father Bañes the Dominican alone defended it, though even he objected to the vow of poverty as understood by the Saint, whom at that time he did not know, having never seen her. He told them that the matter did not concern them, and that it

belonged to the bishop. The town council was obstinate, and would have no monastery founded in poverty within its territory; and so the next day the mayor went to St. Joseph's to expel the four nuns. Refused admittance, he threatened to have the door broken. The nuns replied that they were under the jurisdiction of the bishop and not under his. He now came to his senses and retired, but was none the less bent on the destruction of the monastery. The town council then brought an action against the nuns, and St. Teresa, having no money, had to defend them. Her friends, however, stood forth in her defence, but no lawyers in Avila would undertake their cause, so they had to defend her as well as they could themselves, and the priest Julian of Avila in person served the writs. Don Gonzalo de Aranda went to Madrid to plead; but before the trial began, the zeal of the town council cooled, and the lawsuit was abandoned. Then in Mid-Lent, 1563, the Saint was allowed to return to her children among whom she meant to live as a nun under obedience, but the community appealed to the bishop and the Provincial, and obtained from them the appointment of St. Teresa as prioress. She now changed her name, and Doña Teresa Sanchez Cepeda Davila y Ahumada was henceforth Teresa of Jesus, mother of the reform of Carmel.

The Saint had now a rest of five years, and these years, she says, were the most tranquil years of her life. The vow she had made in 1560 always to do that which is the more perfect was commuted; for her confessor judged it to be an occasion of scruples both to herself and to those who had the direction of her life. The Provincial authorized Fra Garcia of Toledo to release her from that vow, and to leave her free to renew it in another form with certain conditions essential to its validity, by the observance of which there could be no room for scruples. This was done. She was also free from all trouble of a secular kind, for though she possessed nothing she and her religious were rarely in want, though whenever that happened to them they rejoiced in it. The Saint however was not without her cross: she was always doubtful about the state of her soul and very much afraid of delusions. She consulted the ablest and most spiritual priests she could find; on one occasion she made known her

state to an inquisitor, and all assured her there was nothing to be afraid of. It then came into her head that spiritual men might be deceived as well as herself, so for her own greater security she told her confessor to consult "certain learned men, though they were not much given up to prayer;" her desire was to be in the right way, and safe on the doctrine of the Church.

Early in 1567 the General of the Order came to Avila, and visited the Saint. She told him everything, giving him also a full account of her whole life. Her story distressed the General, for he had lost her through the weakness of the Provincial, she being no longer subject to him in the Order, but to the bishop of Avila. The General asked for the briefs by which the Saint was allowed to build her monastery, and to become subject to the bishop. These were shown; the proceedings had been irregular; the Saint when told that she was no longer under the jurisdiction of the General was distressed. The General with her own wish and consent readmitted her, and, moreover gave her leave to found other monasteries, all of which however, were to be subject not to the bishops, but to the Order. He also allowed her to remain in the new monastery, and forbade any of her superiors to send her back to the monastery she had left.

When the Saint began to found another monastery she recognized the need of friars who would help the sisters; and there were no friars of her reform. The bishop of Avila too saw that need, and asked the General to establish houses of men wherein the primitive rule should be observed. Others also made the same request, and the General himself wished it could be done but the friars opposed him, and he, therefore for the sake of peace and the quiet of the Order declined, at least for a time, to sanction the observance of the primitive rule.

St. Teresa herself wrote to him very earnestly, and obtained leave to found two monasteries of men in which the primitive rule in all its strictness should be kept, as in the new house of St. Joseph. She was glad to get the permission, but her troubles were only begun. She did not know one friar in the whole province who would accept the rule, nor any secular person who would enter the Order under these conditions. Nevertheless, she had no doubt that our Lord would find

the friars, and so she went to Mediña del Campo, where on the feast of the Assumption she founded her second monastery of nuns, that of St. Joseph being the first.

She laid the foundation of that house in greater poverty than the poverty of St. Joseph's in Avila. The house hired for her was in so ruinous a state, that in a very few days after taking possession, she was forced to remove with her sisters to another, which was lent her till her own house could be made habitable. In all these troubles she was calm and joyous, rejoicing that she had to suffer, but at the same time effectually hiding from the other nuns all her own distress, that they might not be discouraged and faint. She had gone to Mediña del Campo without the approbation of her prudent friends. Some said she was mad; and even the bishop who thought so highly of her regarded the affair as folly though he was too generous to say so to her. She had however the help and encouragement of her confessors—Father Baltasar Alvarez, at that time rector of the house of the Society in Mediña, and Father Bañes, her constant friend.

In Mediña del Campo she began to search for those who would begin the reform of Carmel, for she longed exceedingly to have friars under the primitive rule. She discussed the matter, but very secretly, with Fra Antonio de Heredia, the prior of the Carmelites there. The prior heard her with joy and promised to be himself the first friar of the reform. She thought he was jesting, for he was nearly sixty years old, unused to austerities and of a delicate constitution. He was a very good religious, recollected, fond of his cell, and learned; but the Saint did not think he could live as a Carmelite under the primitive rule.

Antonio however insisted upon it, and he assured her that he had a vocation. She accepted him on the condition that he would begin at once to order his life—he being prior of Medina—according to the primitive rule. He submitted, and suffered greatly at the hands of his brethren, who regarded his conduct as akin to folly.

But she made a greater gain than this of Fra Antonio; she persuaded St. John of the Cross to abandon his purpose of leaving the Order of Carmel for the Carthusians. About a year later St. Teresa saw the beginning of the reform of

the friars, in a most poor house which she obtained for them in Duruelo.

The last house founded by the Saint was that of Burgos, in April, 1582. She was very ill, and with difficulty reached Valladolid about the end of July, where she was grossly insulted by a lawyer who would have her violate the provisions of her brother's will. Because she was just, the lawyer called her a wicked nun, who was less good than many who lived in the world. The Saint accepted the reproach, merely saying, "our Lord reward you for your charity," as if she deserved to be thus treated.

The prioress of Valladolid turned against and sent her away from the monastery, and on Sept. 16th, the Saint reached Mediña del Campo, where also the prioress treated her with the utmost disrespect. She then went to Alba de Tormes, and nearly died on the road for want of food. She came to Alba on the evening of the 20th ; the next morning she went with the utmost difficulty down to the church for Communion, and then returned to her cell and her bed never again to leave them. Fra Antonio of Jesus, the first who promised to accept her reform, administered the last sacraments. Unable to speak, she turned towards her faithful companion, the Venerable Anne of St. Bartholomew, and drew her towards her, and then crept into her arms: Anne held her there for fourteen hours, and then, seeing our Lord with many saints at the foot of the bed, she prayed for her death that she might enter into joy; the instant she had finished her prayer the Saint was dead. It was on the feast of St. Francis, Oct. 4th, 1582.

The greatness of St. Teresa's work may be guessed from this, that on the day of her death, there were fifteen monasteries of friars, and seventeen of women—the fruits of her sanctity and her legacy to the Church, of which she was always the humblest and most docile child.

St. Augustine:

The Apostle of the English.

BY THE REV. A. J. SAXTON.

I. Rome: Missioners from the White House on the Cœlian.

THERE are certain of God's saints who may not unaptly be compared to that bright star which led the Magi to the feet of the Infant Saviour. We know nothing of the time or manner of its first appearing, and we believe that when its work was done, it ceased to shine; at least, none have pointed out its position. So is it with the class of saints to whom we refer. Nothing is heard of them until the moment when God chooses them to carry out an important mission—it may be to flash as the star did upon the dark night of some nation's unbelief, and bring its people to a knowledge of Himself. And then, when their task is completed, they are withdrawn from the gaze of men, their memory is lost to the busy world, but preserved by the result of their labours.

In no case is this more beautifully exemplified than in that of our own St. Augustine. Our own, and yet again not our own. Not ours, if indeed, as seems certain, another land gave him birth and education, and most of the treasures that he spent so freely in this: but ours truly by many ties stronger, if rightly viewed, than are those of carnal blood and birth,—the bonds which unite for ever an apostle to the land that he has won to God. Ours he is, because to our forefathers he was sent and

gave himself, because amongst them he worked for them and for us, because his influence abides here still, and his powerful intercession is exerted on our behalf from the bright throne that his labours in our land have secured to him.

Not until the day when the great St. Gregory entrusted him with the work so near to his own heart, does his history begin. Of his parentage, the place and time of his birth, and of his early years we know nothing, though his name might lead us to think him an Italian. But if the obscurity that shrouds the parentage and origin of St. Augustine,—denser than that thrown around the first days of St. Patrick, St. Cuthbert, and St. Bede,—will not admit even of controversy, disputants may exercise themselves in determining the rule observed by the monastery of which he was prior. The sons of St. Benedict, who deserve so well to-day of Catholic England, have claimed him for a brother, and with them are ranged authorities of no little weight. But Dr. Lingard, moved by the prevailing voices on the other side, regards their claim as unfounded. We may rest assured however from his position as Prior, and from the choice which a holy and prudent pastor made of him, that the Saint was noted for a simple and dutiful observance of his rule, were that rule Benedictine or Equitian.*

Leaving the question unsolved, we will turn for a moment to look at the bird's-eye view of his monastery and its surroundings in our time. M. Chantrel, in his excellent little *History of the Popes*,† writes as follows. "Englishmen who visit Rome, whatever be the motive which brings them, will doubtless not fail to direct their steps towards a noble edifice, situate on the summit of the Palatine near the ruins of Nero's Golden House, which is the property of one of their countrymen. If from the height of its southern terrace they contemplate the magnificent panorama stretched before their eyes, they may notice a white house

* That observed by St. Equitius, the guide of many monks, who flourished in Abruzzo about the same time as St. Benedict at Monte Cassino.—See Alban Butler, Aug. 11th.

† St. Gregoire le Grand. Paris; C. Dillet, 1874.

that rises midway up the Cœlian Hill. It seems to lean upon a church, around which other small buildings still stand, now half hidden in verdure. It was from here that twelve centuries ago came the apostles of their nation. This white house is the monastery where lived St. Gregory the Great; hither it was that he returned, on the day when he saw those young Angles who in their beauty appeared to him to be angels; here he conceived the project of converting those ancestors of our Englishmen. The three buildings which strike the visitor's eye will recall great memories. The first, upon which may be read the inscription *Triclinium pauperum* (Dining-hall of the poor), still contains the table of stone around which there used every day to sit twelve poor men whom St. Gregory fed and attended in person. The second building, called *Memoriale Sanctæ Silviæ* (Monument of St. Silvia), is a chapel dedicated to the memory of the saintly Pontiff's mother. The third is the church dedicated to St. Andrew by St Gregory, where is still shown the marble pulpit from which the Saint pronounced, on the Apostle's feast-day, a homily that has come down to our times. Such is the spot, such are the memorials, that tell in their mute eloquence of the means taken by Providence for the conversion of England."

For it was, as we have seen, the Prior of this monastery of St. Andrew who found himself summoned, one day in the early part of 596, before the Sovereign Pontiff. He was told that now he must "forget his people and his father's house;" that to him was to be entrusted the performance of a task long coveted by his master and friend the saintly Gregory, and once in vain attempted, to carry the Gospel of peace to the warlike Angles, to make their Ella's land ring with alleluias, to tame the fierce dispositions so ill-represented by their angelic faces, and turn away the wrath of God from their island, making it an island of saints, the dowry of God's sweet Mother.

No doubt the Prior had heard mentioned—perhaps he had even witnessed—the grief with which the Holy Father, when a monk himself, had been recalled from his

journey to this promising harvest, a score of years previously. He bowed his head in humble submission, and set about preparing for his departure. Many other God-fearing monks, St. Bede tells us, were appointed to assist him, to the number as it would seem of forty It would be gratifying to think with M. Chantrel that among them were men of that nation to which they were destined, who, as boys of seventeen or eighteen, had been purchased for this very purpose by Candidus, St. Gregory's legate in Gaul, some four years earlier. But such an idea seems quite unfounded, and Dr. Lingard evidently rejected it, assigning this mission of the Italian monks to St. Gregory's holy impatience, which could not brook the delay necessary for the education of the youthful Angles.

When well provided with every requisite, the band of missionaries went to take leave of Pope Gregory, and he, "after a most diligent exhortation," says Gocelin—a monk who in the eleventh century wrote St. Augustine's Life—"equipped them with arms for the fruitful contest of patience, commended them to God and the angels of peace, and set them upon the road of unending bliss. Long were the task," he continues, "but a pious one, to tell of the holy and tender feelings of the blessed men Gregory and Augustine, and of the saintly monks thus torn from the motherly bosom of their convent church, the pangs of wounded love they felt at this bodily separation, the sighs and tears poured forth on both sides."

For the last time the monks gazed upon the white monastery whose walls had sheltered them so long; they strained their eyes for a parting glimpse of the eternal city, and at length found themselves fairly embarked on their journey. Landing most probably at Marseilles, they set out on their journey through Gaul. But when they had advanced some little distance on their way, "probably," says Alban Butler, "as far as Aix in Provence," they began to repent of their undertaking. For discouraging rumours reached their ears anent the ferocity of the tribes to which they were journeying, a people more savage than the wild beasts; how they delighted in deeds of cruelty rather than in feasting, thirsted for the

blood of the innocent, detested the Christian faith, and to those who would teach them made answer by torment and butchery (Gocelin). It is not by any means unlikely that they had met with men who of their own sad experience could tell of the atrocities practised by the Angles, for St. Bede relates that many of the Britons "in their affliction, sought the lands beyond the sea." From them they might get such a picture of horrors as that drawn a few years before by St. Gildas, himself a Briton, and reproduced in less vivid colours by the holy monk of Jarrow. "The buildings, public as well as private, were thrown down, everywhere priests were butchered at the altar, rulers and people, without regard to honour, cut off by fire and sword alike, while none might be found to bury those thus cruelly done to death." Small wonder perhaps if the hearts of the travellers sank within them, and if, not heeding the expostulations of their more zealous and invincible leader, they clamoured for his return to Rome, "by humble supplication to obtain of St. Gregory that they might not be forced to make a pilgrimage so fraught with danger, toil, and uncertainty." With slow and sad steps, we may suppose, St. Augustine sought the city to which he had bidden a courageous adieu; loth no doubt to appear so soon, and empty-handed, before his bishop, and dreading no slight rebuke as being feeble and infirm of purpose. He set before the Pope his companions' petition, to which—as he himself had doubtless trusted and foreseen—St. Gregory turned a deaf ear. With his own zeal now fanned into an unquenchable flame by the Pontiff's exhortations, and having received the apostolic benediction to confirm and fertilize his good desires, he left St. Gregory's presence for the last time, and hurried back to the sluggards, who were awaiting him in Provence, perhaps at the monastery of Lerins.

In reply to their questionings, he would tell them that henceforth they must look not back but forwards, and then, hushing their ill-stifled murmurs, read them St. Gregory's letter. In it that truly apostolic Father exhorted them to pay no heed to the tongues of evil-speaking men,

but to press forward in the hope of a heavenly reward. He spoke of his own readiness, or rather his longing, to labour with them, and bade them "obey in all things Augustine your prior, whom we set over you as abbot."

Thus encouraged, the monks hastened on their journey northward, for the summer was now well advanced. At Arles they delivered to the Archbishop, Virgilius, the commendatory letter with which St. Augustine had been provided. Then, by what appears to have been a somewhat circuitous route, they sought the tomb of St. Martin at Tours, to beg his intercession in behalf of their future labours, having first left at the chief sees and courts in Gaul Pope Gregory's letters to those who ruled there.

Before crossing over from the mainland, they encountered one of the rare instances of attempts at persecution which we find recorded in their history. Wearied and spent, they would have sought lodgings one night at a little town in Anjou, which the Saint's biographers recognize as Pont-de-Sai. But a crowd of the churlish inhabitants, composed mainly of women, drove them off with many taunts and jeers, and even proceeded to take more violent measures. They followed the meek brethren to some distance, and one of the jades, bolder than her companions, came close to the holy abbot. With a true monk's first instinct, fearful for his chastity, he snatched up a javelin to stay her approach. The weapon darted from his hand, and stuck in the ground an incredible distance away. At once a clear spring gushed out and here the monks spent the night without further molestation, a wondrous light marking out to the inhospitable townsfolk, the elm round the trunk of which the men of God were reposing. A church was afterwards built here, and Gocelin tells us that in his day no woman durst enter it, but was fain to pray at the threshold, in fear of the Saint's displeasure at the insult offered to him by her sex.

II. England; A Bounteous Harvest.

Pursuing their journey, with the interpreters whom St. Gregory had directed them to procure, they crossed the channel and landed in the Isle of Thanet, then of a sufficient size to maintain six hundred families, and separated from the mainland by the river Stour, which St. Bede calls the Wantsume. It is related that the hard rock upon which the Saint first set foot took its impression like soft soil and long retained it, a chapel being afterwards built near the spot. St. Augustine—perhaps he was mindful of the rebuff they met at Pont-de-Sai—would not proceed at once to the royal city, but sent messengers to inform King Ethelbert, whose realm* extended from the great river Humber to the South Sea, that they had come from Rome as bearers of glad tidings for himself and his subjects, concerning a kingdom of bliss that would never end. The king's mind had been prepared by the conversation of his royal consort Bertha, daughter of the Christian Charibert, king of Paris, and by the discourses of her holy companion Luidhard, or Letardus, by whose ministrations, until his death, she had been enabled to practise the rites of our holy religion. Hence the reply sent back to the strangers was most favourable and courteous. They were to want for nothing until the king himself should fulfil his promise of going to visit them in the island, and hear their message from their own lips.

Attended by a train of the chief men of his kingdom, Ethelbert went out one day to Thanet, and sent for the monks, whom he determined to interview in the open air the better to resist, as he thought, any magic arts. Augustine and his fellow-labourers came in procession, chanting their litanies, bearing a silver crucifix and a fairly painted picture of our Redeemer, set off with gold. The

* Realm is here used by the Saxon Homilist in the sense of "rule," rather than of "kingdom" or "territory." Kent alone belonged to Ethelbert, but the other kings south of the Humber acknowledged him as their supreme lord, or Bretwalda.

king bade them be seated, and listened with attention while they preached the word of life. Their abbot was the first to speak. Gocelin professes to relate his very words, probably however from pure conjecture, or it may be from some tradition of his monastery with which St. Bede was unacquainted. Want of space forbids the reproduction of the discourse, which is by no means devoid of beauty. "Then," continues the same biographer, "his coadjutors added various things, according as God gave them to speak."

The seed which they scattered fell on ready soil. "Fair indeed," replied the King, "are your words and the promises which you bring:" but his was not one of the hearts that "when they hear, receive the word with joy, and these have no roots, but are only for a time." Much was yet to be done in the way of good example, tearful pleading, and patient explanation, by his pious spouse and the zealous men before him, in order that what they sowed that day might strike deep into the earth and bring forth fruit. "Since," he continued, "these things are new and uncertain, I cannot yield my assent to them, by abandoning what I, with the whole nation of the English, have so long observed. But because you have come hither from afar like pilgrims, and, if I perceive aright, have desired to impart to us also what you yourselves regard as true and excellent, we will not molest you: it is rather our pleasure to receive you with kind hospitality, we shall take care to provide you with all necessaries and we do not forbid you by your preaching to make all whom you may sharers in the faith of your religion." "Accordingly he gave them an abode in the city of Canterbury, which was the mother-city of all his dominions, and while providing them, as he had promised, with corporal food, he did not withdraw his permission to preach" (St. Bede).

Sixty years ago there was still standing "St. Augustine's Oak," a spreading tree that shaded full half-an-acre. This was believed to be the very one under which King Ethelbert, surrounded by his courtiers, sate to hear the opening discourse of the Roman missioners. But even

such a memory could not preserve it from the axe, and it fell, the last of a large group, to be used for repairs on a farm close by. A more stately memorial now puts the people of Kent in mind of the interview; namely, a stone cross twenty feet high, which Earl Granville, Warden of the Ports, erected in 1884. "St. Augustine's Well" which never runs dry, is near at hand. If we may believe a tradition attached to it, it was here that the Saint baptized his first convert, before going to take possession of his new home in Canterbury. The monks entered the city in procession, displaying their cross of silver, and the picture of our Saviour that has become one of the emblems of our Saint. He, their abbot, brought up the rear, intoning the sacred chant in which the others took their part. Small heed, undoubtedly, he would pay to the throng of Saxons, who gazed in wonder upon the flowing robes of the monks, upon their shaven crowns, their meek and gentle demeanour, their strange standard of the cross, and who listened with admiration to the melodious strains in an unknown tongue, which differed so widely from their own rude drinking-songs and their savage battle-cry. His thoughts, if they wandered at all from the words of supplication that his lips pronounced, rushed back a few months, and dwelt upon the sadness with which, in similar procession, they had left their home of St. Andrew. He seemed to see already verified those words of the psalm: "Going they went and wept, casting their seeds: but coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves." And with the first promises of this joy quickening his fervour, he raised his voice to repeat the refrain, "Let Thy indignation and Thy wrath, O Lord, we beseech Thee, in all Thy mercy, be turned away from this city and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned; Alleluia."

In this way they took possession of the dwelling which had been set apart for their use. At once they began, according to St. Bede, "to imitate the apostolic life of the primitive Church, namely, by assiduous attention to prayer, watching and fasting, preaching to all whom they might the Word of Life, and they showed

a mind disposed to suffer even death for the truths which they preached." Gocelin tells us moreover that on each and all were bestowed miraculous gifts of healing. From all this followed, as a natural result, the rapid conversion of large numbers of the English.

A little to the east of the city stood an old church of St. Martin, built in times when the Romans occupied the island. Queen Bertha had found it dismantled, and after causing it to be repaired, had worshipped here under St. Luidhard. Here St. Augustine assembled his monks for the round of sacred hours and the other services of the church. Midnight found them at their places in choir for matins, followed at early dawn by lauds. Then Augustine and his fellow-priests would start the succession of Masses, that might go on until the hour for midday sext, —a series broken however at sunrise and at the third hour for prime and tierce. At the ninth hour and at sundown the duties of instructing and baptizing their converts, would be suspended for nones and for vespers or evensong; and at last the monks retired to a rest as scanty as had been their meals during the day, barely sufficient for their requirements.

Such were their life and occupations during the early part of 597. The mind and heart of King Ethelbert meanwhile, subjected to so many holy influences, were aided by the action of God's grace. He began to practise the various works of mercy, greatly to the joy of St. Augustine, and at length on June 1st, the eve of the great festival of Pentecost as is supposed, he received from his spiritual father the spotless robe of Baptism. Vast numbers flocked to witness the imposing ceremony, both from Canterbury and from the surrounding country, and many were admitted, after their king, into the limits of the one fold. The wider spread of religion and its firmer establishment resulted from the good example of these fervent converts, and before long St. Augustine deemed it necessary to follow St. Gregory's directions as to his consecration. He accordingly crossed over to Arles, and on November 17th, within a year of his landing among the English, he was consecrated their Archbishop by

Virgilius, the Pope's Vicar in Gaul. He then hastened back to make complete, by presence of its newly inaugurated head, his infant Church. We may imagine the joy and reverence with which its members received him: for until now their functions had been shorn of that solemnity which is lent by a bishop's presence, and by the lifting up of his consecrated hands to give the blessing valued so highly by a faithful people. The Saxons even had felt this, as they listened to the descriptions given by their teachers of the magnificent rites performed in the Eternal City. But most of all had Queen Bertha felt the void, since St. Luidhard had been taken from her by death. Now however her happiness was full, and by sympathy that of her convert husband and of their subjects, as they knelt before the first archbishop of their nation, to receive the benediction he so fervently invoked.

According to St. Bede, one of his first acts after his return was to send off to Rome Lawrence a priest, and Peter a monk, to carry to the anxious Pope the glad news of the rapid spread of religion, and of the archbishop's recent consecration. They were most probably the messengers from whom the saintly Pontiff learnt the tidings which, in the fulness of his joy, he made haste to communicate to Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria. "Full well," he writes, "do I know that in all your good deeds you deeply sympathize with the joy of others. I will repay then your favour and reply to your tidings by others not very dissimilar. The English, a people shut up in a little corner of the world, have been up to this time unbelievers, nay worshippers of stocks and stones. And now Augustine, one of the brethren of my monastery, by my authority has been consecrated their bishop by the bishops of Germany. And on the feast of our Lord's Nativity more than ten thousand English were baptized."

Nor was such a rapid spread of religion due to any compulsion on the part of King Ethelbert. He saw with a holy joy the efforts of his instructors being everywhere crowned with success, though he had paid too

much heed to their lessons of Christian meekness to think that those efforts ought to be seconded by violence or penal legislation. But he was not content to coöperate in the work merely by prayers and good example. He thought it fitting that the ambassadors of the King of Heaven should have no worse lodging than that occupied by himself, an earthly monarch. The royal family consequently retired to Reculver, and gave up their palace in Canterbury for the use of their archbishop and his successors. Then the Church of St. Martin was found too small for the crowds of worshippers. Recourse was had to a pagan temple which stood half-way between it and the city, and in which the king had long celebrated those national rites which he had first seemed so loth to abandon. This fane the archbishop now purified,—anticipating the directions of St. Gregory, which will be noticed in their place,—and fitted it for the worship of the true God. It was the first church which he consecrated, and he chose for it a name calculated to keep ever fresh in the hearts of his monks the loved memory of the land they had so cheerfully abandoned. On property which had belonged to the family of St. Pancratius stood the mansion where St. Augustine's beloved master in Christ, Gregory, had first drawn breath, and in which,—after its conversion into the monastery of St. Andrew,—the Saint's own choicest desires of the monastic state had been fostered and fulfilled. Under the invocation, then, of this martyr youth,—whose noble character and glorious career were to be proposed in ages to come for the loving admiration of English-speaking Catholics by another archbishop,* himself also the first of a line deriving jurisdiction from the centre of unity,—the edifice was dedicated. For centuries the monks at Canterbury would show the altar on which the Saint used to celebrate the Adorable Sacrifice, and tell how, "when Augustine first said Mass there, the demon seeing himself ousted from the abode he had so long occupied, strove to overthrow the church

* Cardinal Wiseman in *Fabiola, a Tale of the Catacombs*.

from its foundations;" and they could point to "the evidences of the event still outwardly visible in the eastern wall of the building."

At the same time were set on foot the repairs of another old Roman church situate in the city itself, near to the palace. St. Augustine destined this for his Cathedral; and from the name which he afterwards bestowed upon it, together with the prominent place in his processions which he assigned to the richly-adorned picture of our Redeemer, we may gather that he cultivated a tender devotion to our Divine Lord's Passion. For "he hallowed it," to use again the words of St. Bede, "in the name of the Blessed Saviour, our Lord and God Jesus Christ." The expense of the repairs was defrayed by the king, and the same generous prince, at St. Augustine's suggestion, laid the foundations of a monastery close to St. Pancratius' Church, and, not satisfied with building it, enriched it with various gifts. It is not known in what year this work was begun; our Saint's eyes were not destined to see its completion, and other hands were to place in its altars the relics, and to mark upon its walls the holy rood in sacred chrism. Seven years after his death it was consecrated by St. Lawrence, his successor, and received the names of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, though better known afterwards as the monastery of St. Augustine.

Along with the work of building these material temples the spiritual edifice in the hearts of the people steadily progressed, and before very long the whole of Kent sang praises to Christ. In the task of preaching, the holy archbishop took a principal part, and was most indefatigable, travelling about from town to town and from hamlet to hamlet, always on foot; his visits everywhere were long remembered by reason of the many blessings, spiritual and temporal, that he left behind him. He seems to have been on one of these missionary journeys when at the close of 601 or opening of 602, the long absent messengers returned from Rome.

They came back laden with gifts from St. Gregory, presents for the sovereigns, and letters, "and everything

necessary for the worship and ministry of the church, sacred vessels to wit, and altar-coverings, ornaments too for the churches, vestments for priests and clerks, relics of the holy Apostles and Martyrs, and also many books" (St. Bede). And what was still more welcome, they brought with them fresh workers—Paulinus, in after years the apostle and archbishop of the Deiri in North Yorkshire, the Abbot Mellitus, and Justus, whom St. Augustine made bishops in 604—all three now honoured as saints. Besides these were the monk Ruffinianus, and a number more, including cantors well versed in St. Gregory's own style of chant.

Most important among the letters was St. Gregory's reply to a number of questions addressed to him by St. Augustine, relative to the government of the newly-established church of the Angles. The whole consultation occupies a considerable space in St. Bede's narrative, and it is with great regret that we must pass it by with so little notice, for much may be learnt by its diligent perusal. The questions of the archbishop often regard matters into which his own knowledge of scripture, St. Gregory more than once reminds him, must have given him already a full insight. Yet with a childlike humility and simplicity, showing no fear of being thought ignorant, he seeks for the confirmation of his knowledge from one whom he evidently recognizes as a divinely-appointed authority, the successor and representative of St. Peter, and teacher of the pure orthodox faith. His second question points especially to his love and reverence for the Roman See, the mother and mistress of the churches. So convinced is he of that see being the model for all others, that he asks, in what might almost be termed a tone of surprise, how it is that "one custom of Masses is adhered to in the Roman Church, another in that of Gaul." The Pontiff's answer is not less characteristic: "Choose assiduously what is most pleasing to God" out of the customs of different places, and teach that to the English. "For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for things." His directions as to celibacy are worthy of notice: he permits marriage to

none in sacred orders.* His correspondence throughout, on the subject of the converted English, is marked by an apostolic zeal and prudence, by a gentle forbearance that does not forget to rebuke when occasion requires, and by a full appreciation of the dignity, authority, and prerogatives of his position, backed up by profound knowledge. Even while he styles himself "servant of the servants of God," his unassuming tone of command never lets us forget that he is Pope.

In another letter to his beloved disciple, written just before the messenger's departure from Rome, he says—"We grant you the use of the pallium† during the solemn celebration of Mass;—ordain twelve bishops in separate districts, who shall be subject to your authority. We will that you send as archbishop to the city of York whomsoever you judge fit to ordain; to this end however, that if that city and the neighbouring parts receive the Word of God, he too may ordain twelve bishops, and enjoy the honour of metropolitan."

It was the Pope's intention that the southern metropolitan, presiding also over twelve suffragan bishops, should, after St. Augustine's death, have his see at London. But such an arrangement as he contemplated was found impracticable, and St. Augustine in consequence left things in the more convenient order in which they so long remained.

"I know, dearest brother," writes St. Gregory to him in another letter, "that the omnipotent God, through your affection, shows forth great miracles in the nation of which He has been pleased to make choice; hence it is necessary that for this same heavenly gift you rejoice in fear, and fear still while you rejoice." He reminds him of our Lord's saying to His disciples, when they related that the devils also were subject to them in His Name; "rejoice rather in this, that your names are written in heaven:"

* "If there are any clerks not received into holy orders, who cannot live continent, they are to take wives, and receive their stipends abroad."—Dr. Giles' translation.

† A band of white wool worn on the shoulders; a token of the fulness of the episcopal office.

and after bidding him "thoroughly judge and sift himself to know what he is," continues to recall to his mind the many reasons for the wonderful gifts bestowed upon him, not for himself, "but for those men in the interests of whose salvation they are conferred." The letter concludes, as it had opened, with the Angels' Christmas hymn; "in this joy then of heaven and of the angels, let us repeat the words of the angels which we have already written: accordingly let us say, let us all say, 'Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.'"

To Queen Bertha also came a letter couched in terms of praise for her conduct "to our most reverend brother and fellow-bishop Augustine." In it she was compared to "Helen of pious memory,"—one of the first-fruits of sanctity of our island,—and urged to persevere in the good work so well begun, "by untiring exhortation to confirm the mind of your illustrious husband in love of the Christian faith." That fervent convert himself received a number of presents, "trifling indeed," said the holy Pope, in the letter which accompanied them, "but which will not be trifling in your eyes when they come to you with the blessing of St. Peter the Apostle fresh upon them." In the body of the letter he advises the king upon his conduct towards his subjects, and upon the means conducive to the prosperity of religion, reminding him of the good example of the emperor Constantine "who by his piety, by the praise he won, surpassed in fame all former princes, and excelled his predecessors in fair renown even as in good works." "Our most reverend brother the bishop Augustine," he writes, "who is well trained in monastic rule, filled with a knowledge of Sacred Scripture, and adorned by God's help with good works, hear in all his admonitions; devoutly put them in practice, and bear them carefully in mind."

The zealous Pope's concern for the entire conversion of the English had been in no way satisfied by the writing of these long letters, of which the above quotations are but the merest fragments. A few days after his messengers had left Rome on their way to England, he

sent off a special courier with another long letter to Mellitus, abbot of this second detachment of monks. It contained fresh instructions, and modifications of what was laid down in the letters already written. One passage is of special interest, as to its influence may be traced a custom still lingering among many primitive and simple-minded villagers—the feast or wake that is celebrated with family reunion and much homely rejoicing, on the feast of the patron saint of their "town." "When the omnipotent God shall have brought you to the most venerable brother, your bishop Augustine, tell him what, after long inward reflection, I have thought about the affairs of the Angles, to wit, that idol temples should by no means be destroyed in that nation; but let the idols in them be destroyed; let the holy water be blessed and sprinkled in the fanes; let altars be raised, and relics deposited therein . . . that the people, when they see that these same temples are not overthrown, may banish error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, resort more familiarly to the spots to which they are accustomed. And since they are wont to slaughter many oxen in sacrifice to the demons, for this cause some festival should be allowed them in exchange; as for instance, that on the day of dedication, or nativity * of the holy martyrs whose relics are placed there, they fashion booths out of the boughs of trees around those same churches that have been changed into such from being pagan temples; and they may keep the festival with religious feasting, and no more now offer their animals a sacrifice to the devil, but to the praise of God kill cattle for their own eating, and in their abundance return thanks to the Giver of all things, . . . For it may not be doubted, that to cut off everything at once, is, with obdurate minds, impossible."

* The day of the saint's death is commonly styled by the Church his natal-day, as being the day of his birth to the life of glory in heaven.

III. Britain holds aloof: Last Labours and Death of St. Augustine.

Among other directions in the letters to St. Augustine he had read the following: "All the bishops of Britain we commit, brother, to you, that the unlearned may learn, the weak be strengthened by persuasion, the perverse corrected by authority." And again; "All the priests of Britain let your brotherhood hold in subjection to the authority of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, that by the word and living of your holiness they may perceive the form of right belief and good life, and fulfilling their part in faith and uprightness, may attain, when God shall please, to the heavenly kingdom." The holy bishop himself was no doubt filled with respect for those who had long kept the faith in the land; he yearned to see the Britons come forth from their mountain-fastnesses, and forget, as his own companions had done, their foolish dread of Saxon cruelty, and their still stronger and more unpardonable hatred towards their conquerors, and to have them join him in garnering the abundant harvest of souls. Accordingly, in the year 602 or 603, it would seem, a meeting was brought about, by the exercise of King Ethelbert's influence, between the Roman missionaries and the representatives of the British Church. St. Augustine cordially invited them to aid in preaching the gospel to the tribes that had dispossessed the nation, requesting at the same time that they would lay aside certain peculiarities of discipline and liturgy, and conform to the Roman computation of Easter, at that time almost universally adopted. They, on the other hand, urged a local tradition of long standing, which, according to Gocelin, they referred not to apostolic times, as they surely would had an apostolic origin of their Church been known to them, but to Pope Eleutherius at the end of the second century. They persisted in their determination to oppose all innovations, and in vain did the ministers of the holy archbishop add their entreaties and expostulations to his. At last the Saint, abandoning his attempts

to win them over by patient and painstaking reasoning, suggested an appeal to that God "Who," said he, "maketh men of one manner to dwell in the house of their Father (Ps. 67, 7.) that He would vouchsafe to make known to us by signs from heaven which tradition should be followed, and by what ways we may proceed to the entering His kingdom." . . . "Let some sick man," he continued, "be brought, and through whosesoever prayers he become sound, let the faith and practice of this one be deemed devout before God, and that which should be followed by all."

Somewhat reluctantly, the British ecclesiastics consented, and they were the first to attempt the cure of the blind Saxon who was brought. Convinced at length of their inability to benefit him, they led the afflicted man to St. Augustine. He knelt down and invoked the Father of lights, the God of all consolation, begging Him to comfort His suffering one by restoring the sight he had lost, "and by the bodily illumining of one man," says St. Bede, "to light up in the hearts of many faithful the spiritual flame of grace." In answer to his prayer the eyes till now dull and sightless flashed bright and sound, and at once all proclaimed St. Augustine "a true herald of light from above." But while acknowledging his as the right path of justice, the bishops declined to enter it without the consent of their people, and asked that he would appoint a second meeting, at which more of their number might attend.

During the interval, they went to consult a recluse of esteemed prudence and holiness. On this occasion at least the hermit seems to have forgotten his wonted piety and wisdom, in advising them to think for a moment of rejecting lawful authority, or to be decided in their acceptance of it by so unsure and trivial a thing as a foreigner's idea of politeness. "If he be a man of God," were his words, "follow him. Our Lord has said 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.' If then this Augustine be stern and proud, it is clear that he is not from God, nor must you regard his word. Contrive therefore that he shall come

first to the place of meeting, and if he shall rise at your appearance, know that he is a servant of Christ and listen to him with obedience. But if he shall despise you, and will not rise to you, though you are in greater numbers, let him be despised by you."

At the time agreed upon, a large body of the British clergy, among them seven bishops, with a number of their most learned men, chiefly from the monastery of Bangor, came to meet St. Augustine. The Metropolitan remained seated, posssibly from the feeling that such an attitude best befitted his dignity as the Pope's representative. It was the duty of the representative of the Papacy to do honour to the dignity of the office represented by him. To rise in the presence of others is an acknowledgment of some sort of superiority of position in them. If Augustine had risen before the British bishops, he would have allowed that they were not inferior to the delegate of the Holy See, and that they had a right to treat with him on an equal footing, instead of being bound to receive from him the orders and the counsels of the Pope. He would have fostered the national as opposed to the Catholic spirit, and his enlightened eye perceived in those British ecclesiastics the seeds of that evil plant which in later ages poisoned the whole land. Forgetting the miracle which had before convinced them, the Britons thought only of their hermit's counsel. "We will not have him for our archbishop," they angrily muttered to each other: "for if now he has not chosen to rise to us, how much more will he contemn us as naught if we become subject to him." Determined as they were to contradict all he said, it was to no purpose that the man of God reduced his demands to three: "that you celebrate Easter at the proper time, that you complete the ministration of baptism, by which we are born again to God, according to the practice of the holy Roman and Apostolic Church; and that you preach along with us the word of the Lord to the nation of the Angles."

As the unsatisfactory meeting broke up, "the man of the Lord, Augustine, is said"—so St. Bede concludes his account of it—"to have foretold in a threatening manner,

that if they would not have peace with brethren, they should have war from foes; and if they would not preach the way of life to the English, at their hands they should suffer the retribution of death."*

His words were thought to have found fulfilment, when in 613, according to the most trustworthy authorities, and at the earliest in 607, Æthelfrith, king of Northumbria led his army to Chester and there slew numerous Welsh. There were also slain two hundred priests, who had come there that they might pray for the army of the Welsh *(Anglo-Saxon Chronicle II, p. 18).* St. Bede's informant set down the total number slaughtered—out of those engaged in prayer—at twelve hundred.

From a human point of view, we may regard this event as the one disappointment in our Saint's career. His preaching to the Saxons had been everywhere blessed beyond all hope. Even now, God had so far shown him favour as to work a miracle in testimony to the justice of his claims. His apostolic zeal and ardent charity seemed on the very point of being satisfied by the change into energetic fellow-workers, of those who hated so fiercely his well-loved children. Sore indeed must have been the trial, to see a hope long cherished dashed to the ground almost on the verge of fulfilment, and to feel that the disappointment might be attributed to a line of conduct, which was not only most innocent or rather praiseworthy in its motive, but could not easily be avoided.

The Britons in urging their tradition against the archbishop were far less excusable than at first sight they may appear: for one part of that tradition could surely not fail to be the attendance of three pastors of their own church at the Council of Arles scarcely three centuries before. At that Synod, composed of more than

* It is difficult to determine the locality of this meeting, styled by some the Synod of Worcester. St. Bede says it was "on the confines of the Huiccii and West Saxons, at a place called to this day, in the English tongue, Augustinœs Ac, Augustine's Oak." In the absence of any conclusive testimony we may fix it, as does Dr. Lingard, at Austclive, on the Severn in Gloucestershire. (*Anglo-Saxon Church* I. p. 68.)

five hundred bishops from the chief sees of the Western Church, the reasons for uniformity in commemorating the Resurrection, the very groundwork of the whole Christian faith and centre of the chief festivals of the Redemption and Sanctification, had been set forth: "that as for many One died and rose again, by all the very occasion of it might be observed with religious mind, and no divisions or dissensions might arise in so great a tribute of devotion." In their first canon, and in the letter written to Pope Silvester, the assembled bishops had desired that the Pope should "address letters to all according to custom" upon this subject.

The intolerance evinced was but the intolerance, if we may style it so, of Christ Himself, ever opposed to disunion in His one fold, and praying just before the commencement of His bitter sufferings "not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, that they all may be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee" (St. John xvii, 9, 20, 21).

The assertion that St. Augustine left the assembly in a passion has very little, if anything, to support it in the narrative of St. Bede: other biographers are loud in their praises of the Saint's moderation. That venerable historian applies once the term "reproaches," and once the word "threatening," to the Saint's language. But surely a superior may many times both threaten and reproach, and, if led by the Holy Spirit, foretell the chastisements in store for the obstinate, without thereby deserving the charge of having lost his temper.

All that is known of St. Augustine, in fine, directly combats the notion that he would stoop to such an infamous act of revenge as contriving the massacre: the prince accused of being his accomplice had been rendered unwilling by his teaching to force Christianity upon the Angles; the calumniators can show nothing from the pages of early writers which gives ground to their belief—nay, are flatly contradicted by St. Bede, who says plainly that "already a long time had Augustine been translated to the heavenly kingdom." They cannot, moreover, tell us how the Kentish king and his adviser, having prevailed

upon Æthelfrith to undertake the expedition, so arranged all the circumstances that the monks should expose themselves to attack.

The saints, like their Divine Model and Master, are never farther from defeat than when the world is glorying over their discomfiture. And so our Apostle recognized in this repulse the hand of God making trial of his humility and confidence. He remembered that it is not success in the work which is crowned, but purity of intention, and resumed with unruffled mind the labours among the people to whom Christ's Vicar had first sent him.

He had not forgotten the Deiri, the comely children of whose land, according to the well-known tradition which St. Bede mentions, had first attracted St. Gregory's attention to our nation, "situate at the extremity of the world." And so, as Gocelin relates, after he parted from the Britons he directed his steps to the city of York, in which a bishop had held his see until compelled to retire by the Saxons. The same patient explanation of their heavenly doctrine, the same mortified way of life, the same disinterested conduct, the same confirmation by "signs that followed" of the word which they preached, the same circumstances as had won them a ready hearing in Kent, were present also in the journey northward of the Saint and his fellow-labourers. It pleased our Divine Master that the words spoken of His own journeyings in Palestine should now become applicable to His zealous minister: "much people followed him, and were in admiration at his doctrine" (St. Matt. iv. 25; and vii. 28).

As they neared the city, which might be styled ancient even at that day, they passed an unfortunate man whose whole frame was drawn together by paralysis, and his sight gone. The noise of the crowd aroused his interest, and he asked one of those from whom he received an alms, what was happening. Being told of the presence of the bishop, and of his marvellous gifts of healing, he resolved to beg his assistance. "Holy man," he cried, "in the fulness of thy well-known kindness aid one who is bereft of both health and means." "Silver and gold," replied this worthy disciple of St.

Peter's successor, "I have none, but what I have I give thee; arise whole in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." With that the stiff helpless limbs grew firm, strong, and supple, and the closed eyes opened to gaze upon that kind face which was never known to turn away from the wretched. At the same time with his bodily health, St. Augustine had the happiness of bestowing upon the poor man the better gift of spiritual life, for he begged at once, we are told by Gocelin, for instruction and baptism.

During the stay of the saintly religious at York, vast numbers were baptized, probably where the little river Foss flows into the Ouse; not in the Swale, as is sometimes said, perhaps from confusing this event with the work of St. Paulinus.

Another miracle signalized the missioners' departure. Still more pitiable, if possible, than that of the man healed before, was the state of the afflicted creature who now presented himself. Stricken with leprosy, and with his body covered with corrupting sores, he pleaded for compassion rather by looks than words, for his malady had almost robbed him of the power of speech. Always ready to dispense the gifts he has so freely received, Augustine raises his hand to bless the leper: "In the name of our Lord, and Saviour, be thou freed from all uncleanliness of thy leprosy." The unsightly ulcers vanish even while he speaks, and the man's skin becomes pure and bright as in the first days of childhood. The little band had to pause on its way, for crowds of people were induced by sight of this wonder to ask for baptism.

They are next found in Dorsetshire, where the archbishop seems to have laboured before. During the course of their preaching in that part of the country, the treatment they had experienced at Pont-de-Sai was more than once repeated. They were received with insults and abuse, the tails of ray-fish tied in mockery to their garments, filth and stones showered upon them and their lives were even threatened with the sword. On one of these occasions their saintly master was permitted by Christ to enjoy something of the glory of Thabor, as a

reward for his willingness to accompany his Saviour in the ignominy of Calvary.

Shaking the dust from their feet, he and his companions had retired in silence and meekness from the men who had so rudely cast them out. They went into a desert-place a few miles distant and there sought strength and comfort in prayer. Augustine was soon rapt in heavenly contemplation, forgot the things of earth, and was favoured by the appearance of Jesus, Who spoke to His faithful one words full of tenderness and encouragement. When the heavenly vision came to an end, he returned to himself. "I see God," he said, "Who will grant us His favour, and infuse into those furious men a better mind." And in truth, scarcely had he uttered the words, when a number of those, lately so troublesome, were seen approaching; they gave signs of the deepest regret, asked for the instruction they had before rejected, and told the Saint that they, along with many others, had been severely chastised by Heaven, after he had gone from their town. The zealous shepherd of souls, willing to give them all the consolation in his power, taught them the great truths that are of necessity, and thought fit also to baptize them. No spring, however, was at hand, and the mountain torrent's bed showed nothing except sand and moss-covered stones. But the same power that drew water from the hard rock to slake the thirst of the children of Israel in the desert, did not fail to exert itself at the prayer of Augustine. As for the baptism of St. Patrick, so now, a miraculous fountain burst from the ground, and the converts were washed in the laver of regeneration. A monastery was afterwards built there, at the place still known as Cerne-Abbas.

At length the people of Canterbury were gladdened by a sight of their venerable father, after an absence of many months. His return seems to have taken place in 604, in which year he consecrated Mellitus for the new see of London, and Justus to be first bishop of Rochester, each in turn being translated to the archbishopric.

Were not our limits too narrow, it would be a

grateful task to describe the progress of the sacred rite celebrated with the solemn chant of the brethren, during which each of these holy men knelt before their superior that he might bestow on them the priceless gift that he himself had gone so far to obtain,—the fulness of the priesthood;—a gift which they were to hand on, a precious heirloom jealously guarded in the country for ages.

It may be that at the same time, "while in hale life," the Saxon Chronicler says, "he ordained Lawrence bishop, that the Church of Christ, which was yet new in England, might not after his decease be at any time without an archbishop." He is the second and last bishop who appointed and consecrated his own successor, and the Venerable Bede remarks, that in this "he imitated the example of the first pastor of the church, that is of Peter most blessed prince of the apostles, who, having founded the Church of Christ at Rome, is said to have hallowed Clement as his helper in preaching, and his successor to boot."

This is the last public act of St. Augustine which the holy monk of Jarrow chronicles. But there exists a record, disputed indeed by a number, that some months after this he built a church at Cratendune, near Ely, in honour of that Lady, the Mother of God, whom so many generations in the land were to call blessed, and whose sweet title and name, forbidden the lips and hearts of the people, endure still in the simple flowers of our gardens and hedge-rows; a token, let us hope, that her loving care is not yet withdrawn from forgetful England.

And now the day came when God, Who had "honoured him in labours and completed his labours," willed to fill up the measure of his merits. St. Bede has given us no picture of that closing scene. But the saint's death, no less than the sinner's, reflects his life, and so we may readily paint it for ourselves. With his spiritual children kneeling around him—the devout monks with whom for ten years he had vied in labouring for God, and the pious sovereigns, his joy and his crown,—the dying Saint would address a few words of farewell to each, and give them his blessing for the last time. And then having purged away the stains of frailty that even he, the favoured one

of God, could accuse himself of contracting, he would receive at the hands of the saintly Lawrence those consolations that in the first and the seventh as she does in the nineteenth century, the Church of Christ provided for her departing little ones—the anointing with oil, and the housel, the Sacred Body of the Lord Jesus. With the last glance of his failing eyes cast upon the picture he loved so well—the face of the Man-God outraged for us in His Passion—he passed to gaze upon that Face, not for a brief space or in clouded vision as in the wilderness at Cernel, but in all its beauty for evermore. It was on the 26th of May, and in the year 606, if we may accept a tradition of his monastery, that the feet which for ten years had shunned no weariness, while treading often unshod the arduous path of an apostle, were drawn up in death.

They bore his remains to a tomb near the unfinished monastery, where they reposed until the year 613, when at the consecration, they were removed into the north porch. Upon his tomb might be read the following inscription: "Here resteth the Lord Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, who erewhile was sent hither by blessed Gregory, Bishop of the City of Rome, and being helped by God to work miracles, drew over King Ethelbert and his race from the worship of idols to the faith of Christ. Having ended in peace the days of his ministry, he departed hence seven days before the Kalends of June [May 26] in the reign of the same King."* For a while the face of the land must have seemed changed, as the people felt that no more would his majestic figure—he was taller from the shoulders than other men—and his commanding presence that yet told of mildness and amiability, be seen among them. Yet his power with God was not lessened, and for many years those who asked for favours in his name, enjoyed the benefits of his intercession. None—from the poor widow whose only child had lost the use of her speech, to King

* Lives of Eng. Saints.—*St. Augustine*, p. 245. Ed. Toovey.

Canute in deadly peril from a tempest at sea—were rejected. His relics were several times translated as occasion required. At one of these translations, when the tomb had been reverently opened in presence of the monks and of Bishop Gundulf, a sweet perfume arose from the sacred remains and filled the air. The body was solemnly moved, clad as it had been buried, in the vestments of his sacred dignity, the whole monastery keeping high festival, as for the Paschal celebration. Then crowds of poor sufferers blind and sick and lame, might be seen imploring relief at the hands of God's servant, and none departed unheard. The venerated bones had their final resting-place in a rich shrine in the interior of Christ Church, Canterbury, until evil days came for the many shrines and sanctuaries throughout the country.

In the year 747 at the Council of Cloveshoe it was decreed that his name should be invoked in the litany after that of St. Gregory, and his feast be observed as a holiday. Their names had long been honoured together in a Mass said every Saturday at an altar in the monastic Church of SS. Peter and Paul. In the 14th century devotion to our Saint seems to have waned somewhat, for Pope Innocent VI, in 1356, renewed the celebration of his festival as a holiday of obligation, making it a double. Finally, our own Pontiff, now happily reigning, by a brief of July 28, 1882, ordered it to be celebrated by the whole Church.

May his intercession and that of the Queen of Saints hasten the time when once more in every corner of the land the soft lamp shall glimmer in the Sacramental Presence of her dear Son; when she herself, with all God's saints, each in due degree, shall receive again from Catholic England the tribute of reverence owing to those "whom the King is desirous to honour;" when all English hearts shall glory as did our Saxon forefathers in whom the faith burnt brightly, in obeying the See to which St. Augustine was so devoted—that day when once again on our island there shall be but One Fold and One Shepherd.

St. Benedict,

Patriarch of Western Monks;

BY THE

RIGHT REV. T. B. SNOW, O.S.B.

In Rome, about the year 490, a little boy with his satchel daily trudged to school from his lodging on the banks of the Tiber. The streets through which he passed bore evidence of invasion and disaster: the hordes of Alaric in 410, of Genseric in 455, of Ricanor in 476, had spoiled and dismantled temple and palace, and left the city a wreck of its former splendour. A boy of ten cares little for historic grandeur, but confines his interest in the world to his school and his home. He was bright and intelligent, with a serious air, and an inner depth in his eyes that suggested thought and recollection beyond his years. He slipped through the streets unnoticed by the uncouth swaggering Teutons, who loved to jostle and jeer at the crestfallen Roman patricians. Had they known his future, they would have stopped to look at the little lad, whom God designed to shape the destinies of their race.

St. Benedict was born in 480 at Nursia in the Sabine mountains, half way between Rome and Ancona. His father, Anicius Eupropius, was a patrician of influence and wealth, so that Benedict and his twin sister Scholastica enjoyed the comforts of a well appointed home under the

tender care of their pious mother Abundantia. In those troubled days Anicius often looked with tearful heart on his dear ones, and Abundantia's love for them would not allay his fears. Education in Nursia seemed out of the question, and the father decided that Benedict would be safer unnoticed in the great city of Rome, and could there receive a training suitable to his position. He selected a trustworthy servant to accompany and take charge of him, by name Cyrilla, probably half slave, half companion, and a type of vigilance and faithfulness. He arranged for their lodging at the house of a relative on the left bank of the Tiber, and gave Cyrilla strict injunctions as to the importance of the charge that he was committing to her care.

It was an anxious and a precious charge, but it was her only one and she gave all the love of a faithful heart to fulfil it. Rome was at that time a hotbed of vice: and in the midst of its wickedness Cyrilla, with ever watchful eye, preserved intact in her charge the bloom of innocence, and kept undimmed the light of grace in his soul. God had given him special gifts, for He had designed him for a great mission; he was intelligent, quick at learning, and most remarkable for interior recollection; he cared not for the games and pleasures of other boys, but delighted to be alone with God. On the wall of his room was a fresco of our Lady, and before this image of his heavenly Mother he daily sought her protection and won her love. His grammar, his school, Cyrilla, and his prayers, made up the daily routine of his life in Rome for years.

A change came: whether his opening mind was horrified at the heinousness of sin in Rome, or whether from a direct call from God to give up the world, hope of advancement, and earthly learning to seek Him and Him alone, the young Benedict resolved to fly from Rome. With trustful simplicity he told Cyrilla his intention, and implored her consent. Cyrilla was sorely perplexed: in the absence of means to communicate with his father, the crisis taxed all her judgment and

tact. Doubtless she entreated, conjured, and did her utmost to dissuade him; but the inner light in his soul, warned her of a divine power that her own pious soul dared not resist. Accordingly as a faithful guardian she resolved at all events to go with him, and thus, as far as she could, remain loyal to her trust.

The eager Benedict brooked no delay, and preparations at once commenced: there were no farewells, save perhaps a few tears before his Madonna on the wall. The careful Cyrilla made up a bundle, and evading prying eyes, the two passed through the gates of the city, and sallied forth into the Campagna. They were a strange pair on a strange journey: the boy light and joyous, like a bird escaping from its cage; Cyrilla sad, silent, and distrustful: he with his thoughts bounding on to some undefined region where he could be with God alone; she with her thoughts at Nursia wondering what his father would say. But where were they going? Simply onwards, they knew not where, but making for the blue line of mountains in the distance. For forty miles they trudged on, passing villa and hamlet, until they reached Enfide at the base of the Sabine mountains.

Enfide is now a wretched dirty hamlet, and perhaps was no better then. The rough peasants received them kindly, and on Benedict consenting to stay, lodged him and Cyrilla, who passed for his mother, in or near the church. Here they lived for months: the patrician boy, delicately nurtured, with rare mental gifts, with great spiritual lights, who, St. Gregory tells us, passed from youth to manhood at a single bound, daily mingled and associated with rude uncultured rustics, shared their food, endured their rough ways, and led their life. It was however liberty for him for he was free to kneel hour after hour in the village church, his soul absorbed in communing with God. Cyrilla grew pensive and wondered how it would all end: she ministered to his wants, and procured for him what comforts she could.

One day she left on the table an earthernware sieve that she had borrowed from a neighbour; by some mishap the crock fell and parted in the middle. Cyrilla on

her return was so distressed at the accident and its consequences, that she sat down for a good cry. Benedict finding her in tears sought without success to console her, so taking away the broken pieces, he knelt down outside and prayed: in a few minutes he returned with a smiling face and showed her the sieve completely restored. This miracle, though trivial in itself, served an important purpose: for it showed the divine sanction for the flight from Rome, which otherwise appeared as a wilful escapade of a runaway schoolboy; it showed his progress in prayer and union with God, and it showed that he had an affectionate heart, and dearly loved Cyrilla. The rustics gaped with astonishment at the miracle, and showed their appreciation in their own simple way by hanging up the sieve in the Church. This veneration pleased not the young Benedict: he yearned to be away from every one alone with God, and his thoughts turned to further flight. This time, though it cost his heart a struggle, he resolved not to take Cyrilla into his confidence; he watched for his opportunity, and one day Cyrilla arose and found the boy missing. She searched the neighbourhood, made every inquiry, and finding all her efforts useless, she doubtless made her way back to Nursia to tell his father as best she could. Here ends all record of Cyrilla, and we may hope that she has long enjoyed her reward in heaven for her tender care of one of God's greatest saints.

Benedict hurried into the fastnesses of the mountains to escape notice; he climbed over rock and through bramble, rounding the spur of the range until he came to the ravine that connects the present Subiaco with Genezzano. Here was a scene of nature's wild grandeur. Nero, attracted by the savage beauty of the spot, had dammed the torrent at its exit from the valley so as to form a lake, and there built a palace. The palace was in ruins and long deserted: its dismantled portals and prostrate pillars added to the desolation. Beyond the placid surface of the lake the eye lost itself in the dim gloom of the ravine, and the ear was dinned with the

angry roar of the torrent. On either side rugged bold rocks jutted up in sheer precipices amid the tangled vegetation.

While Benedict gazed with delight at a scene that promised the fulfilment of his hopes, and deliberated how he could reach the inaccessible heights, there came towards him a man in the garb of a monk. When the first alarm at discovery had subsided, the air of sanctity about the stranger gained his confidence, and after a few words, Benedict opened his heart, and fully disclosed his designs and aspirations. The holy Romanus, far from discouraging the youth, felt that it was not a chance meeting, but that God had sent him as a guide to a chosen soul. He entered into the plans of the youthful hermit, procured for him the habit of a monk, and offered to shew him a secret cave that would suit his purpose. They clambered from rock to rock up some hundreds of feet on the right side of the ravine, the monk steadying the uncertain footing of the boy through the pathless brambles. By dint of great exertion and some danger they reached a small cave with an overhanging mass of rock above, and below a giddy precipice of several hundred feet. Romanus promised to provide him with food from his monastery at the top of the mountain, and as the cave was inaccessible from above, he arranged, to let it down in a basket by a rope, to which a bell was attached to give warning of its approach. He cheered him with words of encouragement, gave him his blessing, and left the young anchoret alone with God.

Truly alone with God, for he had completely cut off the past. The ancestral home at Nursia, the ties of family, a career of promise, the pursuit of learning, even the dear old nurse, the last link, everything was cut off: he had no one and nothing but God. Picture that delicately nurtured boy of fourteen in his new home. The jagged rock walls of the cave enclosed an uneven rock floor some twelve feet by six, the rock ceiling scarcely allowing sufficient room for standing: there was no door to exclude the weather night or day, no seat or vestige of furniture, no blanket to cover him, nor even

straw to lie upon. He saw no one, spoke to no one. The tinkling of the bell announcing his food was the only communication with the world. Morning, noon, and night followed morning, noon, and night without break or change for three years. The days were short, the nights long, for the sun shone but a short time on the deep ravine. He had no protection from the bitter cold of the night, no lamp to mitigate the darkness, no shelter from the piercing wind, the drifting rain, the raw fog, or the icy sleet. Without fire, without change of clothes, sometimes without food, he passed through the heat of summer, and the sharp cold of winter, steadfast to his purpose, without flinching, without even wishing for a change.

What was the occupation of this boy of fourteen? Simply prayer, and union with God. God spoke to him, and he spoke to God. Without book, or master, or guide, he trusted entirely to God, and God Himself taught him the higher paths of spiritual life, enlightened his mind, filled his soul. His only helps to devotion consisted in a wooden cross, and, it is said, four medals of our Lord, our Lady, St. John the Baptist, and St. Antony. Truly God is wonderful in His saints, but there are few whom He has thus adopted in tender years, and guided and directed solely by His own hand. In this cave St. Benedict learned detachment, mortification, humility, poverty, silence, love of God; and attained that wonderful illumination of soul, supernatural insight, and knowledge of the heart, that never left him through a long life.

For ten or fifteen years St. Benedict dwelt in this living tomb, and during the first three years, unknown and in complete solitude. He had his temptations and trials. One day a vivid image of an acquaintance in Rome suddenly fixed itself on his mind, agitated his whole frame, and for the moment tempted him to leave his solitude in order to seek her: he speedily recovered his self-possession, went forth from his cave, took off his garments, and naked rolled himself in a tangle of nettles and briars. He made the thorns enter and lacerate his flesh, so that

their wounds covered his whole body. By this prompt and heroic act of penance, he not only conquered the immediate temptation, but freed himself for ever from similar assaults, and passed the rest of his life in angelic purity.

Having completely cut off the world, and gained a decisive victory over the flesh, he suffered, like many anchoret saints, the direct persecution of the devil. Envious of the sanctity of the saint and the charity of Romanus, the archfiend maliciously smashed the tinkling bell that heralded the saint's spare diet. Like many other spiteful bits of mischief it proved a failure, for Romanus easily remedied the disaster. The devil seems to have been particularly active against St. Benedict, for St. Gregory records many instances of his envy and malice.

After three years of special training by himself in the cave, God determined that this bright light should be no longer hidden under a bushel, but should shine upon men. On Easter day a good priest, who lived four miles from the cave, had prepared a repast suitable to the great festival, when our Lord appeared, and said to him: "Are you preparing dainties for yourself, while My servant is tortured with hunger?" The priest arose, packed up his food, and set off down the mountain side, crossed the valley, and with much difficulty and some bruises climbed up the rocks until he found the cave. St. Benedict welcomed the first human being that he had seen for three years, and invited him to join in prayer, after which they sat down and engaged in spiritual conversation until the priest said, "Let us get up and take some food, for it is Easter day." "I know it is Easter," humbly replied the Saint, "since to-day I have had the good fortune to see you." "But to-day is really the festival of our Lord's Resurrection, and it is not fitting to abstain on it. For this purpose I am sent to you, that we may eat together the gifts of the great God." St. Benedict had lost all count of the days, so secluded was he from the world. Blessing God, they took their food together, talked afterwards of spiritual things, and the priest returned to his church.

Soon after this some peasants climbing up the mountain side, came by chance into the cave, and to their astonishment saw there what they took to be a beast from the texture of his garments. When he arose and spoke to them of God, their amazement turned into awe and reverence. On their return they told their fellow rustics of the wonderful apparition that they had seen, and told their story with such effect that several others ventured up the precipice to verify its truth, and eventually a succession of peasants constantly visited the cave. St. Benedict, far from repelling them and flying again into deeper solitude, received them kindly and attended to their spiritual wants. At all hours, whenever they came, he spoke to them gently, instructed them in the truths of religion, explained to them their duties, warmed their hearts with the love of God, and communicated to them some of the heavenly light that illumined his soul. This missionary work he continued for years, giving an example of zeal, patience, and perseverance that served as a model for numberless bands of his children, who for centuries have been engaged in similar missionary toil through the length and breadth of Europe.

The fame of the sanctity of the young anchoret, and the good results of his teaching and instruction on the neighbouring villages, spread far and wide through the country: not only peasants, but men of standing, and other recluses, came to visit him and profit by his counsel and celestial lights. Reports circulated of miracles and wonders wrought by his prayers: indeed, God seems to have granted special supernatural powers to His servant all through his life. About the year 520, the monks of a community at Vicovarro, a few miles from Subiaco, lost their abbot. The monks cared little for rule or observance but thinking that they would gain reputation by the presence of one who was attracting the admiration of all, they resolved to invite him to take charge of their monastery. They selected a deputation, who went to his cave to urge their petition. The saint for a long time declined, telling them plainly that his way of life would not agree with theirs: unwilling to return without accomplishing

their task they persisted in entreating him, until he reluctantly yielded to their importunity.

As soon as he had taken possession of his new and anxious charge, he at once commenced to exact regular observance, and to insist on the fulfilment of every rule. This did not in any way suit their taste: they preferred that he should observe the rule and attract notice by his sanctity, and that they should jog on comfortably in their old ways. They began first to accuse each other of folly in bringing this man into their midst, they tried to evade the rule, and when they found themselves compelled to observe it in his presence, they strove to avoid him, they disliked him, they hated him and finally resolved at all costs to get rid of him. They held a council, the devil entered into their hearts, and they determined to poison him, arranging to mix poison with the wine that he took at supper. At the appointed time they assembled in the refectory, some with their heads bent down inwardly trembling, others casting furtive glances at the saint, all eagerly expecting the presentation of the fatal cup. In due course the one selected approached with the vessel before the holy father, and held it out, according to custom, for his blessing. St. Benedict raised his hand, made the sign of the cross over it, and crash went the vessel as if struck by a stone, the poisoned liquid escaping on the ground. The holy man rose with unruffled mind, and with a calm countenance addressed the cowering pallid assassins "Brothers, may Almighty God forgive you. Why have you done this to me? Did I not tell you from the first that my ways and your ways would not agree? Go, find some father after your own heart, for you can have me no longer." He then gently arose, quietly walked through them, and without anger or excitement went forth through the night air across the rough country until he came to his beloved solitude in the mountain cave.

His days of complete solitude had passed away, for his sanctity attracted many earnest men, who asked him to allow them to join in his heavenly life, and to live near

him. He did not collect them together in one large body, but separated them into communities of about a dozen monks. In this manner he founded no less than twelve monasteries round Subiaco. A two mile radius would include all the monasteries, so that although each had a superior, they were all under his own supervision: he prescribed the observance, frequently visited them, animated them with his own spirit, and tried to form them after the model, that God had taught him during his long term of solitary life. The monks loved him as a father, they venerated him as a saint, they listened with reverence to him as a master, and strove to conform their life to his teaching. St. Benedict had laid the foundation of his title of Patriarch of Western Monks.

Venantius Fortunatus tells us that about this time St. Benedict visited Rome, twenty-five years after his flight with Cyrilla. The establishment of twelve monasteries entailed many details of administration both spiritual and temporal: necessary articles for the churches, books which were scarce in those days, a supply of priests, and a thousand other things needed provision, and above all ecclesiastical sanction and the blessing of the Holy See for the new institute. St. Benedict received the greatest honour and veneration in Rome; he was accommodated in the Vatican hill, and soon formed a community around him, which, although in the city, he imbued with his own spirit. The power of working miracles did not desert him, for Fortunatus mentions that the result of his prayers gained the admiration and veneration of the whole Senate. Business in Rome prolonged his stay there for two years, after which with a sense of relief he returned to his dear children at Subiaco.

The veneration for the holy patriarch during his sojourn in Rome induced three of the most influential patricians, Equitius, Tertullus, and Boetius, to pay a visit to Subiaco. These nobles were astounded at the heavenly life of the monks; the quiet of the ravine, the air of sanctity, the spirit of recollection, the earnestness of purpose, the utter disregard of earthly pleasure, the celestial peace that pervaded the monastic homes, made

these worldly nobles look upon the monks as beings of a higher world, as angels on earth. These impressions passed not away, for on their return Equitius and Tertullus determined that their families should in some way share in the heavenly life, and the former took his son Maurus, a boy of twelve, and the latter, Placid, a child of only seven years of age, offered them to St. Benedict, and begged him to take charge of them. Others followed this example; and St. Benedict received the children, not as in a school for the purpose of education, but as given to God to become monks, and to grow up from their childhood, as he did, in the practice of monastic life.

Numbers of all ages left the world to adopt the monastic life, and monks of other monasteries petitioned to be allowed to place themselves under the guidance of St. Benedict, and be numbered among his children. He established fresh monasteries in various parts of Italy, sending monks, whom he had trained, to govern and breathe his spirit into them. He himself remained at Subiaco for seven years after his return from Rome; he shewed no elation at the success of his labours, or at the veneration paid to him by all, but retained the same humility, the same interior spirit, the same supernatural insight and power, that he had acquired in his cave.

He used his miraculous powers for the solace and comfort of his brethren. Three of the monasteries near the top of the mountain suffered much from want of water, which was carried up from the lake below. The brethren complained of the labour and waste of time, and suggested a change of site. The saint consoled them, and promised to see what could be done. The same night, while the brethren slept, he took the boy Placid, ascended the mountain side to the rocks above, knelt down, and prayed. He arose, fixed three stones to mark the place, and returned to his cell. Next morning he told the brethren to go to a certain rock, near which they would find three stones, and if they excavated there, God would supply them with water to lighten their labours. At the spot indicated they found the rock already moist, and on digging a small hole a stream of clear water burst from the rock.

A poor Goth, during his term of probation, was ordered to clear some underwood by the side of the lake; during the work the head of his axe parted from the handle, and fell into deep water. Troubled at the mishap and humbly attributing it to his own fault, he hurried to Maurus, confessed his fault and asked for a penance. Maurus mentioned the matter to the saint, who was moved at the poor man's distress and humility, went down to the edge of the lake, and cast the handle into the water: the head of the axe came up from the bottom and fitted itself to the handle. St. Benedict quietly gave him the axe, saying: "Go on with your work, and be not troubled."

One day the boy Placid was sent to draw some water from the lake, and the pitcher slipped from his hands into the water: in his surprise he lost his footing and fell in after it, the current carrying him some distance from the bank. St. Benedict, who was reading in his cell at the time, hastily called Maurus, told him that the boy was struggling in the water, and ordered him to go quickly and bring him out. Maurus ran off with all speed, seized Placid by the hair, dragged him ashore, and when they were both safely on the bank, he found to his utter surprise that his clothes were dry, and that he had been walking on the water. When he related the wonderful event to St. Benedict, the saint attributed it to his prompt obedience, while Maurus assigned it to the command of St. Benedict; when Placid settled the contest of humility by declaring that while he was being dragged ashore he saw the figure of the holy father standing over him.

These instances of miraculous power give us a glimpse of the holiness of the saint, of his entire trust in God in difficulties, and of the favour with which God regarded him. One day while at prayer an angel appeared and told him that God would grant all that he should ask, and that he had been sent to assure him of His protection. The man of God profoundly humbled himself at these words, and protested that he was unworthy of any favour, and that he desired nothing but to fulfil the divine will. The angel replied that God had granted him four special

favours: that his Order should last to the end of the world, and be of great service to the Church in the final battle: that all who faithfully followed his rule should be saved: that those who protected his Order should be blessed by heaven: and that those who inflicted injury on it should perish miserably.

Persecutions are marks of God's favour to His saints, and He allowed St. Benedict to share in this blessing. A secular priest named Florentinus, who had charge of a neighbouring church, was filled with envy at the reputation of the monks. He depreciated their life, and spread malicious reports: they interfered with the work of priests, they were lazy, they set themselves above others, they worked for show, they were not as good as they looked, there was no use in all this austerity, they ought to be content to live like other Christians, and similar things that have been often repeated against monks from that day to this. Finding that this jealous talk had no effect, he schemed various plans to undermine the influence of the Saint, and on the failure of his designs, worked himself up to such a pitch of envy that he attempted his life. He put poison in a loaf, and succeeded in having it placed in the refectory before the Saint. A tame raven, whom St. Benedict fed at meal times, took its usual place expecting its customary allowance: the holy father, knowing by divine light the contents of the loaf, commanded the raven to carry it to the mountains. The obedient bird hopped round the loaf, flapped its wings and croaked, being unable to move the mass of bread. St. Benedict again and again encouraged it, saying: "Take it up, take it up, and carry it safely where no one can find it." The raven at last gained courage, dug its claws into the loaf and flew off with it, returning three hours later to receive the reward of its exertions from the hands of the Saint.

Florentinus, unabashed by this failure and exposure, next endeavoured to undermine the discipline of the monks, and even attempted to corrupt their morals by base and infamous means. St. Benedict had never once

uttered a word of complaint or anger at these persecutions, and enjoined his monks to bear them patiently without murmur. As long as they were directed against himself personally he heeded them not, but when danger threatened his children, he meekly thought that by absenting himself he would secure peace to them, and accordingly he resolved to leave Subiaco and retire elsewhere.

The thought of leaving his dear children saddened his heart, and he suffered great interior trial, when our Lord in a vision consoled him, and said to him: "Why, My beloved son, are you sad at a time when I am about to employ your ministry in a work of the greatest glory to Me? I wish you to carry the light of the gospel to Monte Cassino, where Satan usurps My honour. For this end I give you My Spirit. Arise then, take heart, for I will always be your protector. I will confound your adversary, and will make you victorious whatever enemies may oppose you." Comforted and encouraged by this magnificent promise, he hastened the arrangements for his departure. He assembled his sorrowing monks, and told them what grief he suffered in parting from them, but that God had confided to him a mission that would increase His glory. He begged them to remain steadfast to rule, faithful in observance, and fervent in spirit, as if he were still in the midst of them. His own inclination would lead him to remain with them till death, but as God had designed otherwise, His holy will must be done; he asked them to pray for him, and told them that he would ever have them in his heart. He could not check the tears, sobs, and lamentations of his children who were inconsolable at the loss of their father.

Taking with him a few monks, St. Benedict in the year 529 set out from his beloved ravine where he had spent thirty-five years of union with God. One of the four prophecies announced by the angel was about to be verified, for a terrible doom awaited Florentinus: he stood on a balcony in his house, and saw St. Benedict sorrowfully wending his way from Subiaco. The sight filled his heart with joy, and he gave way to his delight

and exultation at the success of his efforts, when the balcony on which he stood fell, and the unfortunate priest was killed instantaneously. As soon as the news reached Subiaco, Maurus with some others hurried with all speed to overtake St. Benedict, and coming up to him after ten miles, they breathlessly told him that his persecutor was dead, and that he might return. The Saint, in great distress both at the sad end of his enemy and at the joy expressed by Maurus, inflicted a salutary penance on his disciple for his unseemly exultation, but still continued his journey to Monte Cassino.

Half way between Rome and Naples a bold spur of the Abruzzi mountains juts out into the plain, lifting its precipitous sides abruptly from a scene of pastoral beauty. The silver Liris sparkles in the sunshine, and threads its way through vineyard and cornfield, through hamlet and olive grove, until it is hidden by the distant hills. Like a huge watch tower, Monte Cassino commands the peaceful plain. Here St. Benedict and his companions halted. After fifty miles of journeying across country sleeping in the wilds at night, and leaving as tradition points out, the impression of his form on the rock, the Saint reached the spot destined by God to be the centre of monastic life, and the homestead of the Benedictine family.

A rude half-civilized people dwelt on the mountains and laboured in the plain. They were not Christians even, for they still practised pagan rites. On the summit of Monte Cassino a temple was erected over a statue of Apollo, and the rough peasants came to make their offerings, and slay their victims at this last stronghold of Satan in Italy. St. Benedict, inflamed with zeal for the glory of God, and filled with apostolic courage, ascended the mountain, at once overturned the idol, demolished the temple, and burned the sacred grove. He was moved with pity at the miserable state of the idolatrous people, and threw himself entirely into the missionary work of converting them. He was constantly among them : day by day going from hamlet to hamlet, preaching and explaining to them the truths of the gospel : by his

humility, gentleness, assiduity, and his heavenly spirit, he gradually gained their hearts and enlightened their minds. St. Gregory says that his preaching was continual: he gave himself no rest until he had converted the whole neighbourhood, thus in his own person forecasting the future of so many of his sons, who in after ages were destined to be the apostles of nations. For the convenience of the people he erected an altar to St. John the Baptist, and a church to St. Martin.

While the holy patriarch was thus devoting his energies to missionary work, his monks were busy under his direction in building their monastery on the summit of the mountain. At three thousand feet above the sea, and without appliances, this proved to be no easy task. To increase the difficulty the devil worried them by impish and spiteful tricks. At one time flames burst from a part of the building, and the monks in consternation rushed hither and thither with buckets and water in fruitless endeavours to stay the conflagration. The clamour brought the holy Patriarch to the spot, but he saw no fire, and perceived that it was a trick of the devil: by his prayer he dispelled the illusion. Another day the devil appeared to the Saint in his cell, and jeeringly told him that he was going to help the brothers at their work. St. Benedict sent word to them to be cautious; the devil however contrived to overturn a wall, which in its fall caught and crushed one of the young boys. The little fellow was terribly lacerated, his bones being broken and crushed: the monks in terror hurried to St. Benedict, who told them to bring the boy to his cell. They placed him on a sack, and carried his lacerated bleeding form as best they could. The Saint ordered them to withdraw, and alone with the boy, he invoked the goodness of God: the child's bones grew together, the flesh healed, and he left the cell as hearty as when he went in the morning to work.

Notwithstanding the spite of the evil one the monastery gradually rose, and in a few months the regular monastic routine commenced. The building contained no luxury or sumptuous apartments: the stone of the

mountain, and the timber of the woods, shaped by unskilled hands, made a rough-and-ready structure, which provided more shelter than comfort. It sufficed for men who gave themselves up to penance and prayer, who looked not for ease but for heaven. The fame of the Saint's sanctity and miracles, and the wonderful results of his missionary labours, spread far and wide. Numbers flocked to Monte Cassino to see for themselves the holy man and his work, and the grace of God induced them to remain and embrace this life of penance and peace. The holy patriarch taught, guided, and trained these souls in his own spirit: he instilled into them his humble simplicity, his interior recollection, and entire trust in God, teaching that the end of their life and actions should be that God might be glorified in all things.

At Monte Cassino he wrote his holy rule, a marvel of wisdom and knowledge of human nature. At Subiaco the monks followed verbal regulations, but for the sake of the increasing number of distant monasteries, and to render the routine stable and permanent after his death, he committed the observance to writing. Based on humility and self-abnegation, it is itself a conspicuous illustration of his own humility. He calls it the "least of rules" and the "beginning of conversion," and refers his children to the writings of the fathers for the spiritual life. When we consider that from his childhood he had an intimate union with God, that he was endowed with wonderful spiritual lights, that he lived in the supernatural, that he reached the highest stages of prayer, it shows his thorough humility to confine his rule to the prescriptions of monastic observance, interspersed with simple maxims of holy living. Its simplicity has made it permanent, its discretion has accommodated it to varying times and circumstances, and its insight into human nature has made it practical. It has been the model of government, the study of statesmen, the foundation of sanctity, and the charter by which myriads have claimed their right to a heavenly inheritance.

The wisdom and moderation displayed in the rule

resulted from a rare gift bestowed on him by God all through his life, a marvellous knowledge of things hidden to others : he read the thoughts of others, he was aware of what happened at a distance. One day two of his monks, either pressed by hunger or tempted by some special delicacy, transgressed the rule by eating outside the monastery without permission. On their return they presented themselves according to custom before the Saint, who at once taxed them with their fault, and told them to their consternation the kind and amount of food and drink that they had taken.

A gentleman sent his servant to the Saint with two flasks of wine : on the way he hid one of them, and delivered only the other. St. Benedict received it gratefully, and said : " Be careful, my child, how you handle the flask you have hidden : do not drink from it, but turn it over first." The trembling servant hurried away and found a snake in the flask.

A son of a lawyer took his turn at waiting at table, and held a lamp behind St. Benedict. Having nothing else to do he began to think, and complain to himself that he, a person of good family, a clever man, born for better things, should thus act as a menial to this man eating before him. St. Benedict turned sharply round, and said : " Make the sign of the cross on your heart, brother, what is it you are saying ? Make the sign of the cross." He deprived the brother of his office, and when afterwards he told the brethren how he had been indulging in thoughts of pride they understood that the holy Patriarch could read their inmost thoughts. These instances narrated by St. Gregory take us into the domestic life of the Saint, and show the illumination of his soul even in occurrences of every day routine, and we can imagine the effect of it on his children and their veneration for him.

In the same way as the hidden things of the present were before him, so also God gave him an insight into the future. He foretold the day of his death, and the future destruction of his monastery. Theoprobus, a monk in whom he placed confidence, found him one day

in tears in his cell, and in reply to his efforts at consolation, the Saint said: "This monastery that I have built, and all that I have secured for the brethren, are by the judgment of the Almighty to be delivered up to the invader, and I could scarcely obtain from God the lives of the brethren." The Lombards afterwards fulfilled the prophecy, by destroying the monastery, but sparing the lives of the monks.

Totila, king of the Goths, was cruelly devastating the plains of Italy, and threatened Rome. He heard of the miracles and prophecies of the Saint, and determined to see him. To test his powers he dressed up one of his chiefs named Riggo in the royal robes, ordered his officers to pay him regal honours, and sent the sham king to interview St. Benedict. As soon as they approached, the holy Patriarch said: "Put away, my son, put away what you have on, for it is not yours." This instant detection so terrified the rough soldier that he fell to the ground. His comrades hurried back to Totila, and related how quickly their duplicity had been unmasked. The astonished king went in person and humbly prostrated himself at the feet of the Saint, and refused to rise until St. Benedict raised him up; he then severely reprehended the fierce barbarian for his cruel and despotic conduct. "You are doing much evil," he said, "and you have done much evil. Now at least try to restrain your iniquity. You shall enter Rome, you shall cross the sea, you shall reign nine years, and in the tenth you shall die." His fearless words made the king tremble, and from that time he became less cruel, and all came to pass as the Saint predicted.

About three years after the establishment of Monte Cassino, Pope Boniface II. summoned St. Benedict again to Rome, to arrange matters concerning the spread of his Order. The city was full of bishops and prelates, who all displayed the utmost eagerness to see, and to pay honour to, one whose sanctity and miracles were in every mouth, and whose missionary zeal had brought the pagans of the Abruzzi into the church. He gave all his

time in Rome to the establishment of monasteries. Three were founded in the vicinity of the Vatican, and dedicated to St. Stephen, SS. John and Paul, and St. Martin. Numbers of abbots from different parts of Italy gave up their own observance to adopt his rule. Turibius, the holy bishop of Palencia, came expressly to Rome to see him, and, discerning the greatness of his holiness, received the habit from his hands, and went back to establish the new Order in Spain.

On St. Benedict's return to Monte Cassino, he was accompanied by Tertullus the father of St. Placid, and other persons of rank. Tertullus was deeply impressed with the monastic life at Monte Cassino, and shewed his appreciation by giving to St. Benedict lands about the monastery, an island in the Adriatic, and several estates in Sicily. St. Benedict sent St. Placid to found monasteries in Sicily, and a little later for the same purpose despatched St. Maurus to France at the request of the bishop of Le Mans. It is stated that the Emperor Justinian introduced the Order into Palestine and the Levant, and tradition asserts that his rule was adopted in Abyssinia, Armenia, and even Persia.

The increased solicitude entailed by the multiplication of monasteries, did not diminish his fatherly care for his own Monte Cassino. The affection and veneration in which he was held by his children, extended to all the people in the neighbourhood. They owed to him not only the light of faith, but constant care and assistance in their troubles. The frequent wars, and the ravages of the barbarians had a disastrous effect on agriculture, and now and again terrible famine spread over the land. In these times the monastery became their refuge and hospital, and St. Benedict their father and friend. He sent his monks to the villages to comfort and assist the poor peasants: he supplied their wants, he ministered to the sick, he distributed all the food in the monastery without thought of the future. One day there were but five loaves for the community dinner, and the monks became sad and anxious. "Why does the scarcity of bread disturb your minds?" said the Saint, "to-day you have little, to-

morrow you will have abundance." The next day two hundred sacks of corn were found at the gate of the monastery.

A subdeacon named Agapitus came to beg some oil, and although but little remained in the glass vessel, St. Benedict ordered that it should be given to the applicant. The cellerarius, anxious to save this last drop for the brethren, took no notice of the order. St. Benedict became very angry at the neglect of his commands, and ordered the glass vessel to be cast out of the monastery, that nothing might remain in it by disobedience. The glass vessel was at once thrown out of the window down the precipice, struck on a rock, and, strange to say, did not break. The Saint sent for it and gave the oil to Agapitus. He assembled the brethren, and sternly reproved the cellerarius for his disobedience and want of confidence. On returning from prayer they discovered that the empty vessel had been filled with oil.

His charity and affection for the peasants made them devoted to him, and St. Gregory narrates several instances of the simple confidence that the country people placed in him.

The lawless Goths greatly harassed the peasantry by their exactions, using threats, torture, and even death to extort money. One of these robbers named Zalla, noted for his cruelty, had seized an unfortunate peasant, and had tormented and worried him, until to escape further torture he stated that he had entrusted all his goods to the servant of God, Benedict. Zalla believed him, and binding the rustic's arms close to his body, drove him before his horse bidding him to shew the way to this Benedict. The pair thus ascended the mountain, and found the Saint seated in his cell reading and taking no notice of their presence. "Get up," said Zalla, "and restore to this peasant the things that you have received from him." The holy father quietly raised his eyes, and looked first at Zalla, and then at the peasant, and immediately the cords that bound the poor man fell off of their own accord. Zalla was thunderstruck at the power of the Saint's mere look, fell at his feet, and begged for

mercy: St. Benedict called together the brethren, reproved him for his cruelty and bade him depart.

Another peasant after long watches by the deathbed of his child, saw his life ebbing away, and was distracted on realizing that his dear one was dead. He snatched up the body, and clasping the cold clammy form of his little one to his heaving breast, stalked up the mountain side to seek St. Benedict. At the monastery he learnt that the Saint was in the fields with his monks, and he put the corpse down at the monastery gate, and hurried off to find him. As soon as the father saw him, he cried out: "Give me back my son, give me back my son." The Saint replied, "Have I taken your son?" "He is dead; come, bring him to life again." "Nay, brother," said the man of God, "this is no work of ours, but of the apostles. Why will you place burdens on us that we cannot bear?" The poor father persisted in his petition, and in his agony swore that he would not go away until his son was restored. St. Benedict was touched at the grief of the father, and tried to console him: "Where is he?" he said. "His body is lying at the gate of the monastery." St. Benedict went there with his monks, knelt down, placed himself over the little corpse, raised his hands to heaven and prayed: "Lord, look not on my sins, but on the faith of this man who asks for the life of his child, and restore to this little body the soul that Thou hast taken away." Scarcely had he finished the prayer, when the corpse trembled, and began to move before the astonished eyes of all. St. Benedict took the child by the hand and delivered him alive and well to the overjoyed father.

Besides monasteries for men, St. Benedict established several convents, where holy women followed his rule, and over one of them he placed his sister St. Scholastica. Once in the year he allowed her to come to see him, and in a building at the foot of the mountain he and some of the brethren met her, and spent the day in spiritual conversation. In the year 543 the annual visit passed off in the usual manner, but in the beautiful evening, absorbed in their conversation, they had not noticed that

it grew late. St. Benedict arose hastily to take his departure, but St. Scholastica pressed him to stay the night, and continue their conversation. "What is it you ask me, sister? I cannot possibly remain out of my cell for the night." The holy nun rested her head in her hands on the table and prayed; when she raised her head there suddenly arose such a terrible storm of rain, with terrific thunder and lightning that going away became out of the question. "May Almighty God forgive you, sister," said St. Benedict, "what have you done?" She replied: "I asked you and you refused me, I asked the Lord and He heard me. Leave me now if you can, and go back to your monastery." St. Benedict bowed to the will of God, and they spent the night in relating their mutual experiences of the spiritual life. It was their last interview, their next meeting was in heaven.

Three days after, while praying in his cell, St. Benedict saw the soul of his sister leave her body, and ascend into heaven in the form of a dove. He at once assembled the brethren, and they united in thanksgiving to God for the glory of his sister. He sent some of the monks to bring her body, and placed it in a tomb beside the one that he had prepared for himself, that as they had loved each other in life, they might not be separated in death.

His own life was drawing to a close, and before its termination God granted him a wonderful grace. St. Gregory tells us that St. Benedict kept night vigils in his cell in the monastery tower, while the brethren slept. He was standing at the window praying, when a brilliant light more dazzling than the brightest sunshine illumined the darkness of the night. In the midst of the brilliancy he saw the whole world at one glance as if he were present at each part of it. Entranced with the sight, he saw the soul of Germanus, bishop of Capua, carried by angels in a globe of fire up to heaven. In order to obtain a witness of the glorious vision, with a loud voice he called Servandus who slept in the room below. Servandus hastened as quickly as he could, and witnessed a part of the wonderful light. Messengers sent to Capua

ascertained that Germanus had expired at the very time that the Saint had witnessed the globe of fire.

At the beginning of the year 543 St. Benedict announced to the brethren the day of his death, March 21st. On March 15th he ordered his grave to be opened, and saw that all was in readiness for his body. He was seized with a fever, and confined to his cell, where he endured much suffering, for the malignity of the fever increased day by day. His children could not doubt his prophecy, and knew that they were about to lose their father. In grief and awe they hung about his cell, striving yet once more to see him, and hear his voice. He endeavoured to restrain their tears and sobs, consoled them, exhorted them to be constant to the rule, and bade them look forward to the time when they would meet him in heaven. On the morning of the 21st, they felt that his end had come: obeying his orders they almost carried his emaciated frame into the church, and there resting on the arms of two of his children, he received holy communion, and raising his hands to heaven, in the very act of prayer he breathed forth his soul before the altar of God. The brethren reverently took the body, and, after the accustomed ceremonies, buried it by the side of St. Scholastica in the grave that he had prepared in the chapel of St. John the Baptist.

On the day of his death two of his monks at a distance, who were separated from each other, had the same vision. They saw a beautiful path, strewn with rich garments, and decorated with brilliant lamps, leading from the cell of the Saint to heaven. When they gazed at the sight an angel spoke to them saying: "This is the path by which the beloved of the Lord, Benedict, ascended up to heaven."